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HERO

February 2001



Most Eligible Bachelors 2001

HEROMAG.COM



Feb 2001, #14 - \$4.95 US \$6.95 CAN

HERO

FEBRUARY 2001

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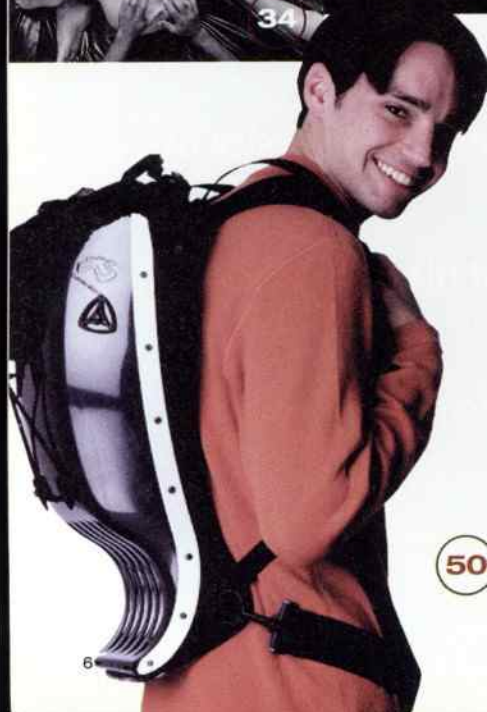
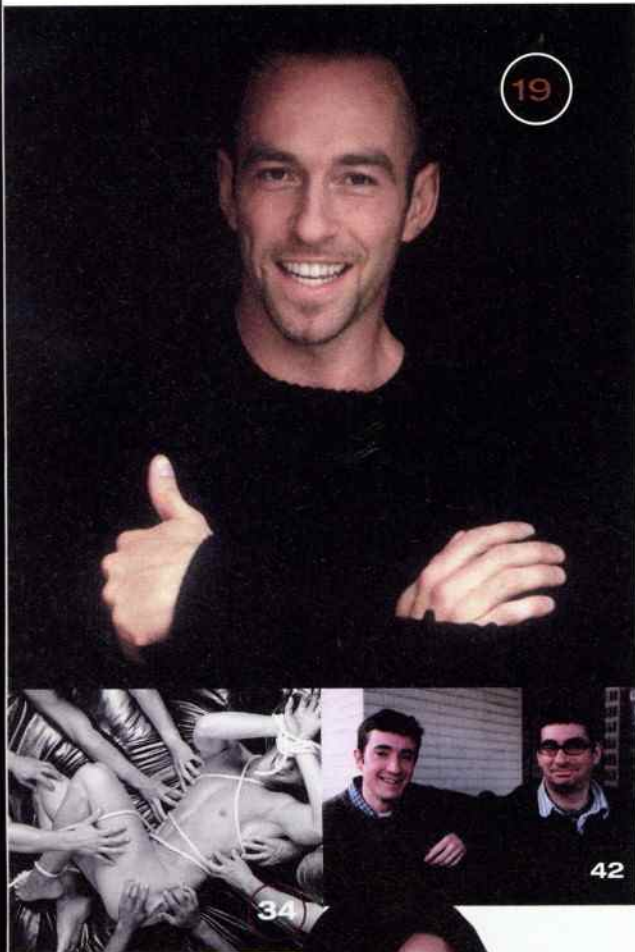
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COVER: West coast bachelors strike a pose. Photographed by John Skalicky. Styling & grooming by Alberto Leslie. Clothing from Universalgear.com



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Printed in Canada

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"Never hold on because you are too afraid to let go" -Sarah Smith



My brother Michael went to a Streaming Media conference a few weeks ago as a representative of HERO. He called me afterwards to share his experience of working the expo with a HERO press badge.

"I really got a taste of what you have to go through," he confided.

"When I told people that HERO was a magazine for gay men, the vibe totally changed. Sometimes it was really positive, but often it was like a door slammed shut in their mind. I'm usually so friendly and outgoing, and I suddenly became aware that some guys thought I was coming on to them. I became so self-conscious, I just started describing HERO as a national men's magazine."

"Welcome to the gay world," I laughed.

I've included our magazine's mission statement in this issue so you can see for yourself just what gets the HERO team up in the morning. HERO is a magazine about transformation. Transforming our bodies, minds, spirit, relationships, families, and communities, and ultimately transforming our society and the world's views on not only gays and lesbians, but everyone who considers themselves "outside the mainstream." To live in a world where kindness, compassion, and respect are valued above all else.

We believe that what it takes to create that kind of transformation is to live life heroically.

And that doesn't mean you have to rescue kittens from a burning building (although if you see a kitten in a burning building, please grab him). Being a hero means you're simply willing to do the things that most people aren't willing to do.

For you, it may mean giving up smoking. Learning how to apologize after a fight with your boyfriend. Volunteering with disabled kids once a week. Coming out to your parents. Giving an employee a well-deserved raise. Paying the toll for the car behind you. Speaking in public when it scares you to death. Requesting help for an alcohol or drug addiction. Spending a couple years in the Peace Corps. Starting a savings account when you're living paycheck to paycheck. Forgiving a friend for a grudge you've been carrying. Visiting a convalescent home to make a difference there. Leaving a job you hate to create a career you love. Complimenting someone at work who you can't get along with. Or maybe just getting your ass on a treadmill every day so you can stop complaining about your weight problem.

I truly believe that as gay men we've been given two valuable gifts that we can either accept or reject.

1) We're different, so we have the capacity for greater understanding and compassion for others. But will we then choose to be more compassionate?

2) We look like everyone else, so we have the capacity to "blend in" and go along with the status quo, or come out and be who we are. But will we then choose to be ourselves?

The choice is up to each and every one of us, and this magazine is here to support you in being the hero that you are.

Because if gay men become the heroic leaders that we are destined to be, there will come a day when even my straight brother won't have to hide in my closet.

THE MISSION OF HERO MAGAZINE is to provide a gay man's guide to life that is useful, inspiring, sexy, and compelling, and to promote a life lived heroically.

We will accomplish this mission by:

- Maintaining an editorial voice that is positive, confident, and inspiring.
- Conducting our business with integrity; sharing our vision and prosperity with others; doing what we say we will do; and taking personal responsibility for the quality and results of our work.
- Creating advertising partnerships that are relevant and empowering to our readers, staff, and community.
- Promoting events that have a healthy, positive impact on the gay community.
- Producing entertaining and informative books, videos, and other products that support our mission.
- Maintain a powerful, dynamic online presence that gives our readers the tools for heroic living and a platform for lively discussion.
- Focusing our resources on being the largest, highest quality, and most innovative magazine for gay men in the world.

he-ro \ n [L. fr. Gk. heros] (14c) 1. a mythological or legendary figure often of divine descent endowed with great strength or ability 2. a man admired for his achievements and noble qualities 3. one that shows great courage 4. an object of extreme admiration and devotion.

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Submissions should be sent via regular mail only to the address above. Please do not make queries via telephone. HERO is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts. Email and fax submissions are not accepted. For complete writer guidelines, visit heromag.com

HERO (ISSN 1521-9658) February 2001, #14. HERO is published 10 times per year by HERO Magazine, LLC, 451 N. La Cienega Blvd. Suite One, Los Angeles, CA 90048. SUBSCRIPTION RATES: 10 issues (1 year), \$24.95; Canada: \$36.95 (USD); UK, \$44.95 (USD) All other foreign: \$54.95. To subscribe, call 800-464-9229. To order by mail, send your name, address and a check, money order, or credit card number with expiration date to: HERO Magazine, PO Box 339, Mt. Morris, IL 61054-7568. Print or electronic reproduction without express written permission from the publisher is strictly prohibited. Neither photographs nor accompanying editorial matter is indicative of that person's sexual orientation, conduct, or actual quotation. The publisher does not assume responsibility for statements made by advertisers. HERO welcomes manuscripts, queries, submissions, photographs and letters. HERO cannot be held responsible for unsolicited materials. HERO, The Magazine for the Rest of Us, is a registered trademark. All rights reserved. Copyright 2001 HERO Magazine LLC.

letters

TO THE EDITOR

ESCAPE FROM PAKISTAN

Christopher Wynn's article about Dr. Hamid has started a whirlwind of changes in my life. I'd been debating a new life in a new city, but fear kept me trapped in a state of stagnation. After I read Christopher's article, I realized there is nothing I cannot achieve. I wish Dr. Hamid the very best for his future and thank him for fighting to achieve his goals. He's made a young African-American gay male from the South want to fight through his fears.

James S., Charlotte, NC

You have a wonderful publication and I look forward to each and every issue. I would especially like to thank you for the story entitled "Escape from Pakistan" about the terrifying story of intolerance and hatred that Farrukh Hamid was forced to endure. This heartbreaking story made me cry and

reminded me that even though we live in a homophobic society we should be thankful that in America at least we are free to love whom we want without risk of legal action and a possible death sentence. However, it should also make us pause and realize that we have a long way to go in our world in order to completely abolish homophobia and intolerance. Nobody should have to endure that kind of tragedy and hardship just to be able to live the life that he was given. Thank you again for telling his tale and please write about more tales of courage and accomplishment in the future.

Todd P. via email

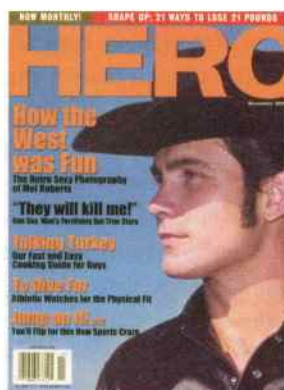
I very much enjoyed reading your article about Farrukh Hamid. The only thing I felt was missing was an update about his friend, Adil. Is there anything else known about his life since parting from Farrukh?

Daniel K., Canada

[Since Adil was actually an Iranian citizen, he had the option of staying

next door in Iran for as long as needed to avoid any persecution in Pakistan. Farrukh on the other hand, as a Pakistani citizen, could be picked up even in Iran. He had to apply for asylum somewhere to avoid persecution, and the US was the best option. Sadly, there was only one passport (thanks to Farrukh's oldest brother): Adil's. So the risky choice was obvious. One stroke of luck at least was that Adil had been planning a trip to the US anyway, so he already had the proper travel visa lined up, in addition to his passport. Adil made promises to come to the US

and find Farrukh, no matter where he was. Unfortunately, he never did. Farrukh feels that Adil may have thought it wiser not to visit, after everything that had happened. Farrukh has made some efforts to locate Adil again, but a lot has changed since that first relationship. —Ed.]



GREAT JOB

I can't tell you how much HERO has done for me in making me finally feel like I have a place at the table. I am not a sculpted Greek god circuit boy, nor do I have sex with anything in pants at the drop of a hat. I am just a regular guy who wants to fall in love and live happily ever after, and I was beginning to wonder if I was the only one. The "Duo" interviews always give me hope, the feature articles are great, and I love the departments on cooking, boy toys, etc. Thanks again for everything!

Mark A. via email

Your most recent issue compelled me to write and let you know that it truly struck a chord within me. I am a gay man who happens to be disabled. After reading Ed Gallagher's story (October 2000)...I felt I was not the only disabled man out there who happened to love other men. Also, being a son of a football coach, I never nurtured my own athletic ability until after

my accident, where subsequently I have a host of gold medals....to say the least this issue spoke volumes to me—thanks, and keep up the great work.

**Ron Bielicki, Vice President
National Spinal Cord Injury Association
Boston Chapter**

I just picked up your latest issue from the newsstand yesterday and I have to tell you I am impressed. As a springboard and platform diver, and a current Master's National and World Champion, I was pleasantly surprised to see the profiles on so many gay athletes. I have been coaching my sport for 16 years now, and to hear some of the stories...well, I am very glad I can be a positive role model, and a person for young folks to look up to. I make them deal with the fact that I am who I am. Thanks for being so supportive of lasting relationships, and for being a leader in the world of gay journalism.

GO SPORTS

I just wanted to comment on how great it is to see that you are regularly including sports info, not just health and fitness related. I love the guys at Outsports.com; they have a great thing going there. It's great that you are highlighting athletes headed to the Gay Games in Sydney as well—it's early promotion for what

will be an amazing event. I can't wait to get back to the Games. Amsterdam was incredible!!! Keep up the sports info, it's all very cool. I am currently working on my master's thesis involving gay men in athletics. It's interesting research and something I don't think is recognized nearly enough. Thanks for all you are doing for our community!

Mike B., Seattle, WA

Thanks for finally re-doing the HERO website. The new message boards have been extremely helpful to me, and I've even met some new friends online. Also, please consider making more HERO-brand stuff—I love my shirt and hat, and I'm ready for the complete line of HERO clothing!

Rick. L. via email

[Glad you like the boards—we pull a lot of info for the magazine from the concerns and discussions expressed there. And more HERO apparel is in the works—stay tuned! —Ed]

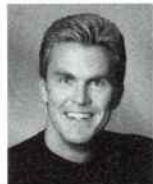
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Christopher Wynn

ROBERT RIEGO DE DIOS is a contributing stylist whose life in retail is legendary. Robert also designs lamps, cooks Filipino food and cleans up after his boyfriend.

JON GISWOLD (not pictured) is best known for his work with Reebok/Sports Club New York and CRUNCH. His best-selling book *Basic Training: A Fundamental Guide to fitness for Men* is now interactive on his website, jongiswold.com. Jon's Health & Fitness column is a HERO regular.

CHRISTOPHER MEASOM lives in New York, but circles the globe as a travel freelancer. "Part of the joy of travel is coming home," he says; he shares that home with his boyfriend Tim.

JOHN SKALICKY, a Los Angeles native, has been shooting a variety of commercial work for the last 10 years. He has shot advertising and editorial for such clients as *Muscle and Fitness*, *Code*, *Audio/Video Interiors*, *Car Audio and Electronics*, Geffen Records, Toyota and Lexus.

STEVE SILER is a freelance automotive journalist whose work is featured regularly in national automotive and specialty publications. Siler was born and raised in Los Angeles, and is proud to be one of the few openly-gay automotive journalists in the business.

CHRISTOPHER WYNN is a contributing commentator for *National Public Radio*. His essays and articles have appeared in a variety of publications and online at the Gay Financial Network. He currently lives in Dallas.

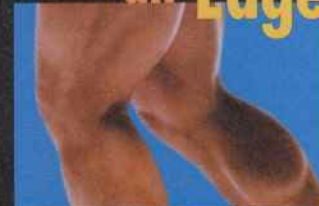
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ers. Philip can be
seen as himself in
the documentary
*The Eyes of
Tammy Faye*.

Pick from the Pro BOOTY CALL

Style magnate Philip Bloch calls these Nikes "the perfect shoe. From basketball to boardroom, from disco to desktop, these are the shoes you can wear with anything, at any time."

He should know. Running from photo sessions with the likes of Jim Carrey to an interview with Barbara Walters, Philip is known to wear out his kicks. He owns all three pairs shown here. (L to R: Michael Jordan's "New Jack" 3/4" high boot (\$160), The Air Ten-Sixty One (\$200), and the Air Max Transpose (\$160). Nike Shoes are available at Nike.com, Niketown locations nationwide, Footlocker and Champ's stores.)



The Pod Bar in Tokyo



Soapdish



The Embryo Chair



FACE VALUE

If beauty is only skin deep, then scratch this SURFACE, the new men's skincare line from Aramis.

Touting breakthrough technology that features blue reflectors (blue apparently diffuses other colors, a good thing if you happen to be blotchy), SURFACE walks a fine line between skincare and make-up.

But does it work? HERO staff members swear by the skin smoothing gel, which somehow makes your face as smooth as glass while making pores appear smaller. And the Healthy Look Gel gives you a "glow" without staining the fingers. I don't know about blue reflectors, but I look better when I'm wearing it, and that's what matters, right?

DESIGN FOR LIVING

What will the future look like? Most likely something out of the mind of Marc Newson. At 35, Newson has designed chairs, lamps, watches, bicycles, restaurant interiors, automobiles, glassware, household objects and the interior of a \$40 million private jet. He is even rumored to be designing the interior for the also-rumored Apple Stores. In an age where it is difficult to be original and unique, Newson's designs appear to be the real thing: smart, forward and apparently comfortable. Born in Australia, Newson originally set out to design jewelry and sculpture. While studying at the Sydney College of the Arts he turned his attention to furniture design, and in less than a decade he was designing for major firms in both Asia and Europe. Now settled in England, he is the subject of the book *Marc Newson* (published by Booth Clibborn Editions) and is working on a commission for the the Ford Motor Company and the bar for the Standard Hotel in Los Angeles.

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Got the blahs? Energize Your Life!

In the quest for more energy, there is a distinction to be made between *real* and *borrowed* energy. *Real* energy is what you feel when you are eating right, exercising regularly, handling stress well, and living a happy, healthy life. *Borrowed* energy is the temporary feeling you get from quick-fix solutions like sugar, caffeine, cocaine, and other stimulants. Unfortunately when something is borrowed, there is always a payback. The payback for borrowed energy is the "crash" of low energy you feel later, which is often remedied with more of the quick-fix solution. If you want energy all day long, then it's time to put down the Starbucks and focus on finding the real energy in your life.

1 Caffeine. It may seem like a national treasure, but it's an addictive drug with potentially harmful side effects, especially when overused. You don't have to give it up completely, but remember: caffeine is in coffee, tea, soda, and chocolate, so how many servings are you really taking in each day? A cup in the morning is fine, but if you need 3 or more to get going, it's running you. If you're into the "ritual" of it, try replacing it with a new ritual—herbal tea, sparkling water, or a bag of carrots. If you can keep your daily intake to no more than 3 servings (and ideally zero), you'll be opening yourself up for more sustained energy.

2 Put out. The physical energy you expend is directly equivalent to the energy you get back; i.e., working out now revs up your metabolism, so you'll have more sustained energy later. Just remember: every time you work out or even go for a brisk walk, you're making a deposit into your energy bank. Drink coffee and you're making a withdrawal. Got it?

3 Breakfast. Even if you feel great in the morning when you skip breakfast, you'll pay for it by crashing or overeating in the afternoon. *Plus* it slows your metabolism and makes you gain weight—the exact opposite of what you probably think you're doing. The best rules for an energy-filled breakfast are a) avoid sugar, b) limit caffeine, c) keep it low-fat (skip the sausages, donuts, bacon, etc.) and d) mix protein and starch (good examples are bran muffin & yogurt; scrambled



egg substitute, & toast; oatmeal, low-fat milk, & a banana). If you're used to skipping breakfast, it may take 2-3 weeks to reset your appetite clock, but it will happen.

4 Weight Lifting. There's no way around it—lifting weights builds and maintains lean muscle mass and speeds up your metabolism, which will help you burn more fat. You can eat more, not gain weight, and have more energy to boot. You don't have to go to the gym every day, but weight-lifting two or three times a week is the fastest and most predictable way to increase your body's ability to stay lean and energized.

5 Inner passion. Find out what fuels you, what really turns you on, and surround yourself with it. If you are excited about musical theatre, put up a poster of your favorite show. Can't wait to travel to France? Take a French class at a community college and keep a picture of the French Riviera on your desk. Sex, politics, movies, your boyfriend, dancing—surround yourself with it and you'll always be energized by and anchored to your passions.

6 Grazing. Eating 5-6 smaller meals a day is essential to sustained energy, good nutrition, and the ability to get results from your exercise program. The most fundamental part of grazing is to plan ahead so you're not caught eating whatever is lying around. Know what you're having for breakfast, lunch, and dinner the next day, and bring healthy snacks to work with you. Focus on a single serving of protein and carbs in every meal or snack. Overeating

carbs at lunch will make you feel tired, but a light lunch like a salad with a chicken or turkey sandwich will keep you focused all afternoon. Also, try to add two salads a day to your diet.

7 Breathe. Deep breathing is one of the most powerful yet overlooked aspects of overall health. Almost every alternative fitness regime (meditation, yoga, tai chi, etc.) is based on breathing exercises, because deep breathing involves the whole body. It wakes up your body, oxygenates your mind, and brings clarity and focus to your thoughts. Instead of coffee or cigarettes first

thing in the morning, try taking 10 slow, deep breaths and see how you feel.

8 Water. You've heard it a million times—stay hydrated by drinking 8-10 glasses of pure water a day. Caffeine is a diuretic, so if you drink caffeine you'll need to drink more water to balance it out.

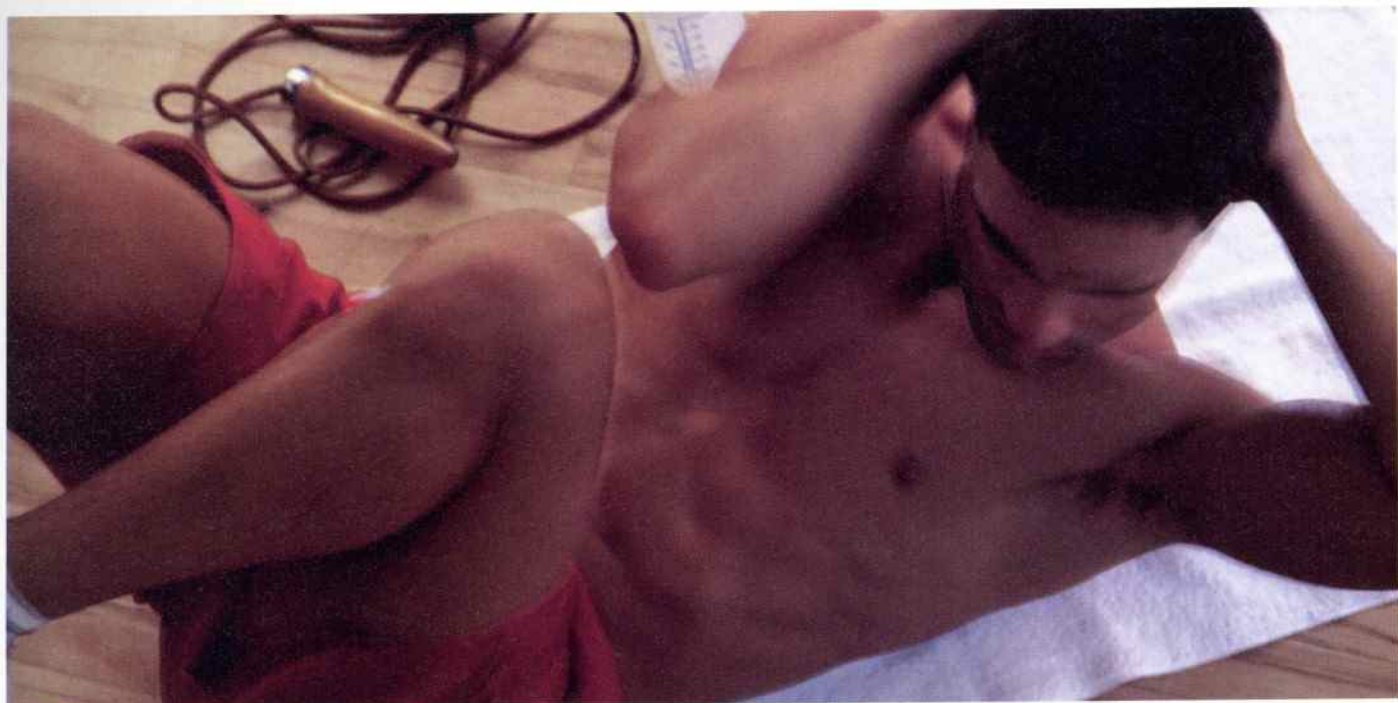
9 Clog or cleanse? Every time you put a food item in your mouth, ask yourself: Will this clog or cleanse me? Meat, dairy, bread, and animal fats tend to clog your system; they take longer for the body to digest and tend to slow things down. Fruits, vegetables, sprouts, fresh juices, and other high-fiber whole foods are cleansing, meaning they are easily digested, quickly available to your body for energy, and keep things moving.

10 Create your energy within. The next time you're feeling tired, just take 30 seconds to act intensely energized—take deep breaths, open your eyes and your mouth wide, pull your shoulders back, stand up straight, clap your hands, and walk quickly around the room (best to do this when you're alone). You'll see that you always have the power to create energy within yourself.

Note: If you feel fatigue that is not remedied with rest, or if you're feeling run-down for more than a month, there could be physical problems like thyroid, chronic fatigue syndrome, or mononucleosis. See your doctor to make sure you're on the road to recovery. **H**

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Crunch-Free Six-Pack

Do ab-rollers really work?

The quest for a chiseled midsection is the most frequent concern I hear from fitness clients. How can we compete with the washboard abs we see on television, in magazines, and on billboards all around us? Of course, the bodies you see on models every day is probably not a reasonable goal, but "six-pack" abs are achievable with a little work, and possibly the right piece of equipment.

You may have noticed the recent infomercial onslaught of torso trimming sliders, rollers, gliders, tigers and trackers. The truth is these devices are just a reinvention of an old idea. Back in the 70s, someone put a stick through a small wheel and rolled back and forth on the floor to condition the abdominal region of the body. You can still find the trusty wheel in sporting good stores around the country. However, technology has improved not only the device but the muscle-defining technique as well.

Understanding the muscles used with these devices is vital. You will be conditioning the *rectus abdominis*, which connects the sternum to the pelvis along the front of your body, as well as the internal and external obliques, running along your sides. These muscles hold you upright, allow you to rotate side to side, and support the spine in a natural position.

The action is simple enough: Holding onto the handles in a position where your hands are below your shoulders, at a distance that would be similar to "all fours" push the wheel out away from your knees until you feel tension in your ab area. Maintain extended arms and tight abs, and breathe in as you extend out (to avoid injury, don't extend fully until you are well

trained). Exhale as you pull yourself back to the position you started. This movement will also engage the lats on the side of your back and your arms.

Many of the new abdominal rollers are redesigned with one or as many as four wheels. No matter how many wheels they have, they all keep in mind that this exercise is not easy, which is why the Wheel went away in the first place. The **Ab Slide** and the **Torso Toner** have a feature that assists or recoils as you return to the starting position. Pushing the wheels away from your knees creates a tension around the mechanism and as you return it will give you a boost. The **Torso Tiger** comes attached to a bungee-type cord to help pull you back. The **Torso Track**, the machine that's been the most hyped to date, is on a track system that sets the range of motion for you like a rowing machine. The other devices (free of the track) allow you to work a variety of movements besides just front and back, but the **Torso Track** has been improved by adding a balance bar that allows you to use your Track like a Pilates bed, offering lower body exercises and other balance boosting programs.

While the recently improved **Torso Track** is probably the best quality machine if you have the cash, all these units have staying power and will work if you work them. An added benefit is that you should see results in only a few weeks. If you really commit and perform a reasonable 4-5 sets of 20-25 repetitions, as well as continued cardiovascular and strength training routines, and eat a healthy balanced diet ... you can get that rippled torso you see on billboards by summer—without doing a single crunch. **C**



(top to bottom)
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 Ab Slide (\$39.95) abslide.com
 Torso Tiger (\$69) torsotiger.com
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Do any of the following apply to you? (41)

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The "Internet Appliance" has finally arrived, thanks to 3Com, the company responsible for the PalmPilot. "Audrey" is the first of a new line of "Ergo" products, meant to bring your home seamlessly into the digital age. Audrey gives you Internet access, email, a calendar and datebook, and complete synchronization with your PalmPilot (of course) for \$499. It's not meant to replace your PalmPilot or your computer, but rather, to work with them. If you place this elegant, Jetson's inspired technology in your kitchen, for example, then you'll have access to all of your most valuable information in the "nerve center" of your house. No more looking for your Palm or booting up the computer in your back office. Audrey isn't a speedy processor, and the built-in 56K modem will seem very slow if you're used to high-speed Internet access at work. But after assigning it your favorite "Channels," Audrey will automatically dial up and download your favorite web pages and email at, for example, 6AM when you're still asleep. Then you can wake up, stroll into the kitchen, and read your email and the day's headlines or personalized news and weather over coffee. The coolest features include a touch-screen, a wireless keyboard, and a clear pen that flashes green when you have email. Every visitor to my house asked about it, so the "art" factor is definitely there. You can also hook Audrey up to a printer, as well as a high-speed cable modem for more practical web surfing. Audrey is bleeding-edge technology, but a good indicator of what's in store. If this were a 17-inch wall-mounted flat screen, we'd be looking at the future. (3com.com/ergo)



function **7** price **5** coolness **9**

Quiet Storm

The Bose Noise Canceling Headset

function **9** price **4** coolness **6**

During a recent flight home, the obnoxious storyteller seated directly behind me (and the screaming baby carried up and down the aisle) both seemed to disappear thanks to Bose' new QuietComfort headphones. I'm scared to death of flying—the roaring engines, loud announcements and startling ding you hear every time someone wants something drives me crazy. But "noise canceling" technology generates an inaudible white noise with a sound wave that's exactly opposite incoming ambient sound, effectively canceling it out and providing library silence no matter where you are. Add your own portable equipment, or even the in-flight audio program, and you're blissfully alone (or don't plug it in and just enjoy the quiet). After slipping them on and feeling the light-weight pads snuggle around my ears, I was finally actually able to do what the pilot told me: "Relax, sit back and enjoy the flight." I'll never fly without them. (\$299, bose.com)





Contentville

When You're Starved for Signs of Intelligent Life

function **7** price **10** coolness **8**

A new entry in the ever-shrinking world of e-business, Contentville calls itself the "first store run for and by people who love content," with content defined as "anything that qualifies as brain food." Created in part by Brill's Content, they sell the requisite books and magazines at competitive prices (even cheaper if you join their Citizen's Club), but you'll also find things you never knew you needed: study guides, dissertations, screenplays, speeches, legal documents, and transcripts, often for immediate download. Want to read William Faulkner's Nobel Prize acceptance speech? Interested in a transcription of the 1996 gay-issue-related Supreme Court case *Romer v. Evans*? This stuff sounds obscure, but if you start looking you'll end up with a full and fascinating e-shopping cart. There are several ways to find other things you'd enjoy; an expert commentary section containing essays from industry aces in several fields; a contributing editor "What I'm Reading" section with entries from luminaries like Wendy Wasserstein, Neil Labute, and Anita Hill; a magazine expert forum for comments about periodicals in each genre; and Buzz from the Floor, a section with commentary from local independent booksellers on events and issues.



iCamMaster

Tune In, Turn On

function **8** price **10** coolness **10**

If you've got broadband internet access, you've got the world. Literally, with the iCamMaster software. This piece of software lets you pull up an endless number of live video feeds from around the world, including city cams, museums, bars, private home cams, animal cams, even live NASA pictures from space. It's truly addicting—my favorites include a bar in Belfast, a couple different views of Times Square, the Champs Elysees in Paris, and a live feed from sev-

eral Carnival cruise ships sailing around the Caribbean. You can also set a feed as your desktop pattern, which gives your whole computer screen a live, updating video feed background. The best update you can get right now is every 15 seconds, but when feeds increase to realtime, this is going to be the future. It's a great feeling to turn on your computer and have a live glimpse around the world. For Macintosh only, \$20 shareware (free trial) available at icammaster.com.

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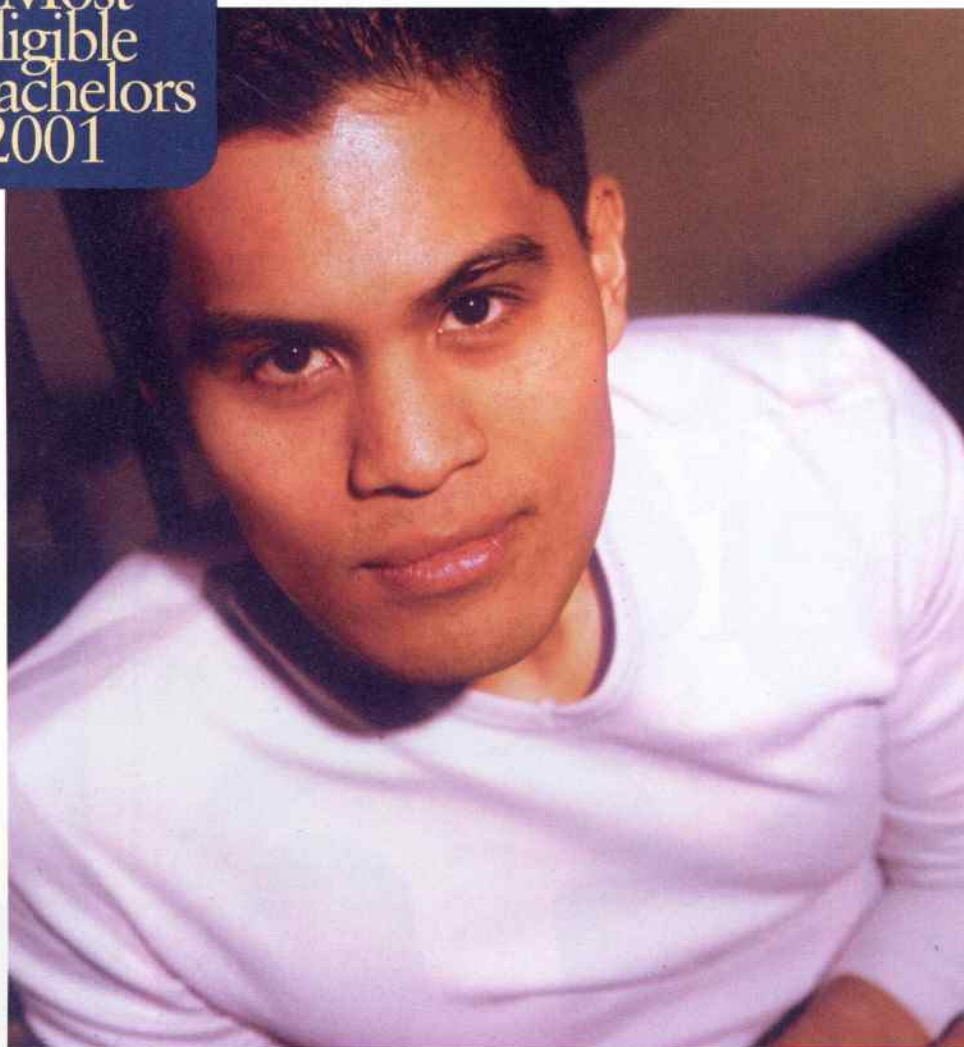
REAL MEN. REAL TASTE.
-VERSACE-
CHINA

Most Eligible Bachelors 2001

Welcome to HERO's second annual Most Eligible Bachelor issue! Cute, smart, sexy, funny—we've scoured the country for the single guys you'll want to bring home.



Most Eligible Bachelors 2001



GREG WEINER

JAMIE

(JAMIE14@HEROMAG.COM)

Marketing, Liquor.com (but loves to act!) Chicago, IL

AGE: 28 SIGN: Leo

ACHIEVEMENT FOR 2000: "I completed both the Chicago and Texas AIDS Rides. In Texas, my mom crewed and dad volunteered. They needed something calmer after marching in the Dallas Queens Parade last year."

I WANT A GUY TO "make me smile the same way I want to make him laugh."

SEXY IS: "Someone who challenges my mind, expands my horizons and kisses well."

WHY I LIKE MY JOB: "If I have to have a day job, why not combine two of my favorite pastimes—cocktails and the internet."

WORST HABIT: "I can make snap decisions about people. Call it a gay man's version of woman's intuition, but I tend to follow my gut instincts without reproach."

MUSIC NECESSITY: "I'm a *huge* Dixie Chicks fan."

HIDDEN TALENT: "I know most of the numbers in my Palm Pilot from memory. I just keep forgetting the names."

DREAM JOB: "Starring in my one-man show on Broadway."

PEOPLE DON'T KNOW: "I get sweats just thinking about a first date. When you're on stage, it's easy to be someone else. Being you is the hard part."

FAUSTO

(FAUSTO14@HEROMAG.COM)

Stage actor and singer, New York, NY

AGE: 30 SIGN: Aries

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "My loyalty to friends and family. And I've been told I have a great smile and nice legs."

WHY YOU WON'T: "I'm a perfectionist, so I'm pretty demanding."

I WANT A MAN "who is honest, laughs a lot, and doesn't take himself too seriously."

WHY I LIKE MY JOB: "I was a shy kid; this is my chance to be stupid and goofy and not feel self-conscious."

SEXY IS: "A guy who's not afraid to look you straight in the eye and hold your hand."

MY PHILOSOPHY: "You get back what you put out—so be nice."

PLACES YOU WON'T FIND ME: "A Barbra Streisand concert, out at the Roxy all night, a smokers' lounge, or a golf tournament."

BIGGEST PHOBIA: "Dark basements and hallways. I run up the stairs if I have to turn off the light at the bottom."

HIDDEN TALENT: "I make a mean batch of fudge brownies from scratch, and I can lift one eyebrow at a time."

FAVORITES: Marc Anthony, Aretha Franklin, *the Chronicles of Narnia*, Stephen King, Anne Rice's vampire and witch books



RICK DEAN

DANNY

(DANNY14@HEROMAG.COM)

Freelance Designer, Los Angeles, CA

AGE: 22 **SIGN:** Virgo

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "Sensitive, caring, loving, and passionate."

WHY YOU WON'T: "I'm picky."

I'M LOOKING FOR A GUY "who can communicate, is serious about relationships, and wants the most out of life."

MY DREAM GUY NEEDS "the ability to be affectionate."

WHAT TURNS ME ON: "Nature, the good in people, lifelong friendships, family."

THE HARDEST PART ABOUT DATING "is finding people that are genuine and don't flake."

BIGGEST TURN-ON: "Good conversation and chemistry."

BIGGEST TURNOFF: "An unkempt appearance."

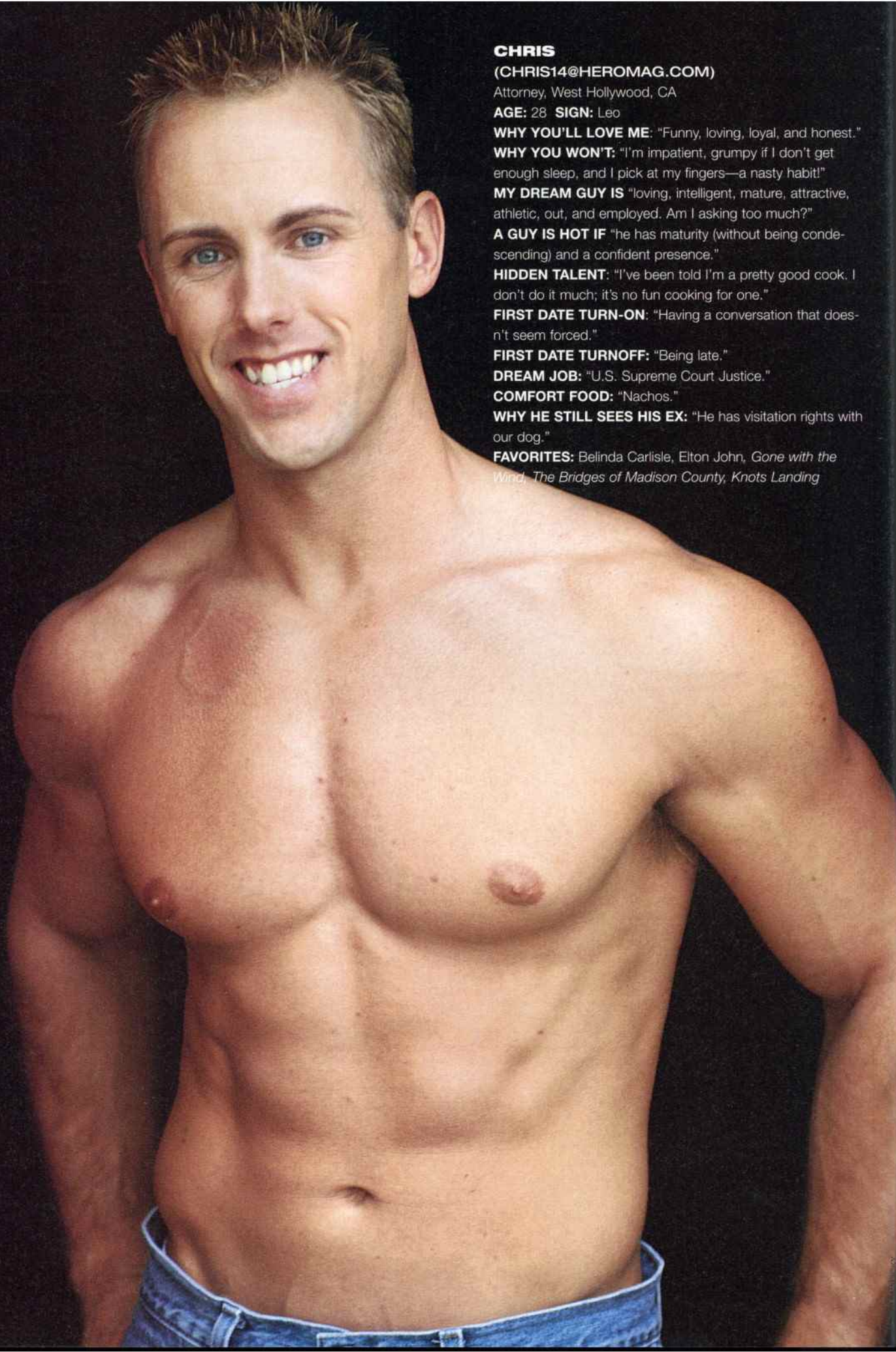
IDEAL TRAVEL DESTINATION: "A deserted island."

DREAM PET: "I want a black Labrador."

DREAM JOB: "Starship captain."

FAVORITES: Sting, *The Game*, 2001, *Men's Health*, *Where the Sidewalk Ends*





CHRIS

(CHRIS14@HEROMAG.COM)

Attorney, West Hollywood, CA

AGE: 28 **SIGN:** Leo

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "Funny, loving, loyal, and honest."

WHY YOU WON'T: "I'm impatient, grumpy if I don't get enough sleep, and I pick at my fingers—a nasty habit!"

MY DREAM GUY IS "loving, intelligent, mature, attractive, athletic, out, and employed. Am I asking too much?"

A GUY IS HOT IF "he has maturity (without being condescending) and a confident presence."

HIDDEN TALENT: "I've been told I'm a pretty good cook. I don't do it much; it's no fun cooking for one."

FIRST DATE TURN-ON: "Having a conversation that doesn't seem forced."

FIRST DATE TURNOFF: "Being late."

DREAM JOB: "U.S. Supreme Court Justice."

COMFORT FOOD: "Nachos."

WHY HE STILL SEES HIS EX: "He has visitation rights with our dog."

FAVORITES: Belinda Carlisle, Elton John, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Bridges of Madison County*, *Knots Landing*

Most Eligible Bachelors 2001



GREG WEINER

KIMO

(KIMO14@HEROMAG.COM)

Airline flight purser, New York, NY

AGE: 35 **SIGN:** Virgo

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "Friendly smile, helpful to everyone, good listener, even-tempered, and double-jointed."

WHY YOU WON'T: "I like to clean and organize things like Monica from *Friends*. Also, I'm a terribly bad liar."

SEXY IS: "Beautiful eyes and ticklish earlobes."

MY GUY NEEDS "to know his way around the kitchen and cook something other than Spam. I'll clean up while he walks our dogs."

PERKS FOR DATING ME: "Free travel for me and my domestic partner."

PROOF THAT I'M HANDY: "I installed new outlets, lighting fixtures, and dimmer switches without getting shocked once...OK, once, but it didn't hurt that much and my eyebrows are growing back."

ON PLAYING DADDY: "Someday I want to raise a child. I want to travel around the world as a family and be like Auntie Mame: 'Life is a banquet, and most poor suckers are starving to death.'"**FAVORITES:** Moby, Kristine W., *Shakespeare in Love*.

GEOFFREY SPOTTS



JOSH

(JOSH14@HEROMAG.COM)

Political and Training Coordinator, Gay & Lesbian Victory Fund, Washington, DC

AGE: 22 **SIGN:** Pisces

MY BEST QUALITY: "My sense of humor, even if it tends to be a little sick sometimes. I think it's important not to take everything so seriously."

MY WORST QUALITY: "I'm somewhat impatient, which should not be confused with ambitious. They are two completely different animals."

SEXY IS: "My ex-boyfriend used to have cute little love handles; I loved them. It all comes down to presentation (in theory, making Martha Stewart the expert on sexiness)."

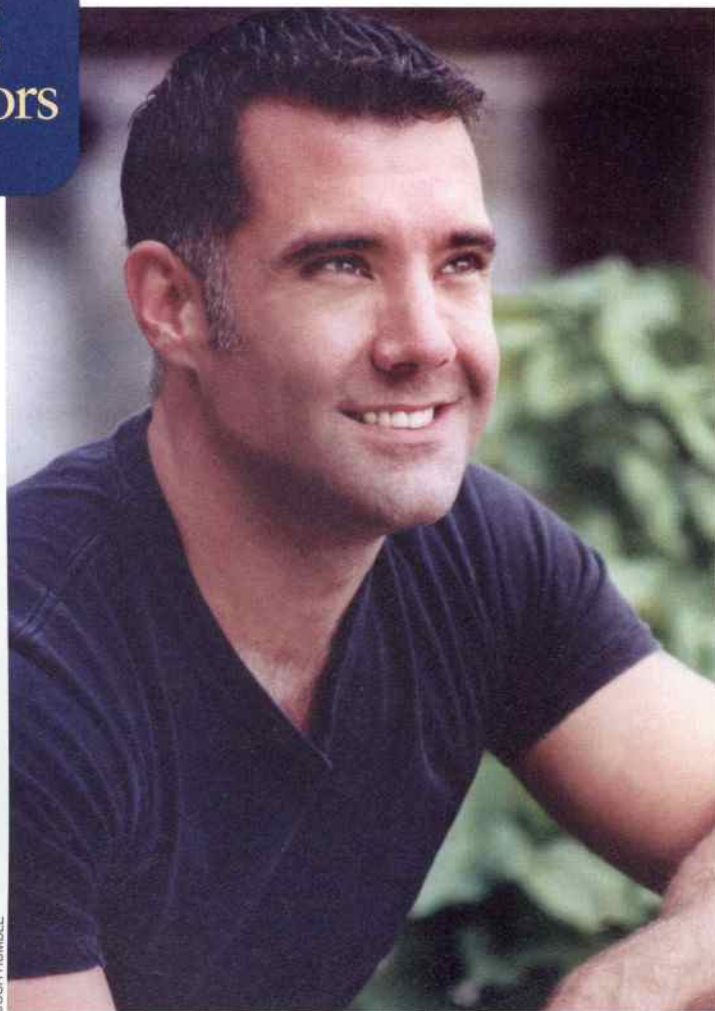
MY DREAM GUY: "I like people with goals, those who know what they want and how to get it accomplished."

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: "It's actually a lot more fun than it sounds, but that's coming from someone who lives for politics. It's fulfilling."

FAVORITES: *Christmas Vacation*, *Dune*, *Steel Magnolias*, *The West Wing*

"My ex-boyfriend used to have cute little love handles. I loved them. It's all about presentation."—Josh

Most Eligible Bachelors 2001



JOSH HUMBLE

ROGER

(ROGER14@HEROMAG.COM)

Director, March of Dimes, Fort Lauderdale, FL

AGE: 36 **SIGN:** Aquarius

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "My sense of humor. I love to laugh. I also really care about my friends; I would do anything for them."

A GUY IS HOT WHEN "he has the ability to see the positive elements in any situation."

I WANT A GUY WHO IS "fun, healthy, attractive, caring, responsible, and who thinks I'm the best thing since sliced bread."

ON HIS LISTENING SKILLS: "People confess everything (I mean everything) to me. I guess it's good to know I can be trusted."

ON STAR QUALITY: "I like to be the center of attention. But at least I'm entertaining. I think I serve a purpose."

TURN-ON: "A mind-blowing kiss."

TURN-OFF: "Someone who kisses like a cow."

GUILTY SECRET: "I've read *Valley of the Dolls* about 10 times."

PEOPLE DON'T KNOW "I've kept a journal since I was 17."

FAVORITES: *All About Eve*, *Sex in the City*, Pad Thai

ROBERT

(ROBERT14@HEROMAG.COM)

Wine Sales, Patchogue, NY

AGE: 40 **SIGN:** Leo

MY BEST QUALITIES: "I'm outgoing, fun, and I have a wicked sense of humor."

MY WORST QUALITY: "Impatience."

I WANT A GUY WITH "a bad boy smile and angel eyes."

SEXY IS: "A man's eyes when they sparkle."

FIRST DATE TURNOFF: "Bad breath."

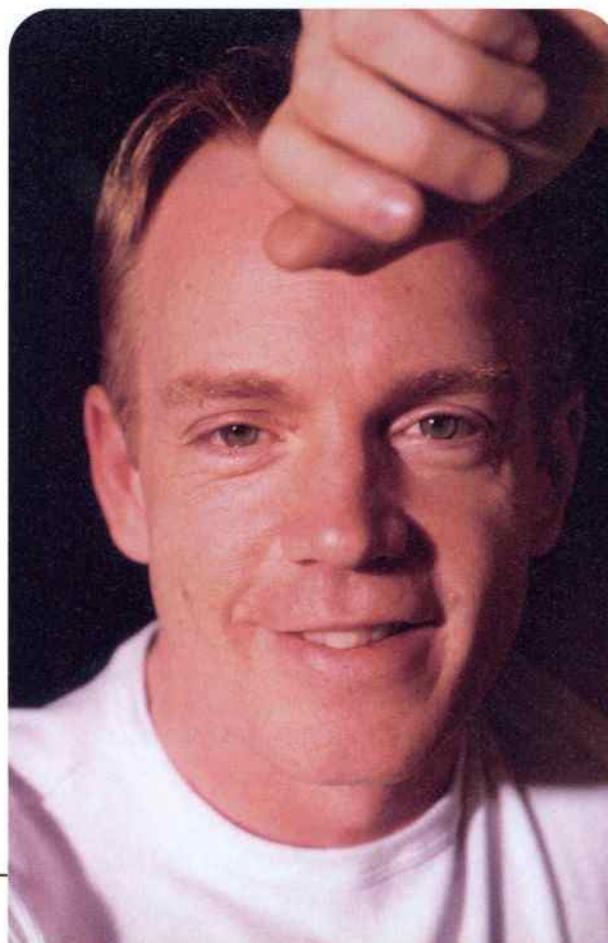
BIGGEST FEAR: "Becoming complacent and not challenging myself."

THE WAY TO MAKE ME SMILE: "I love expensive things."

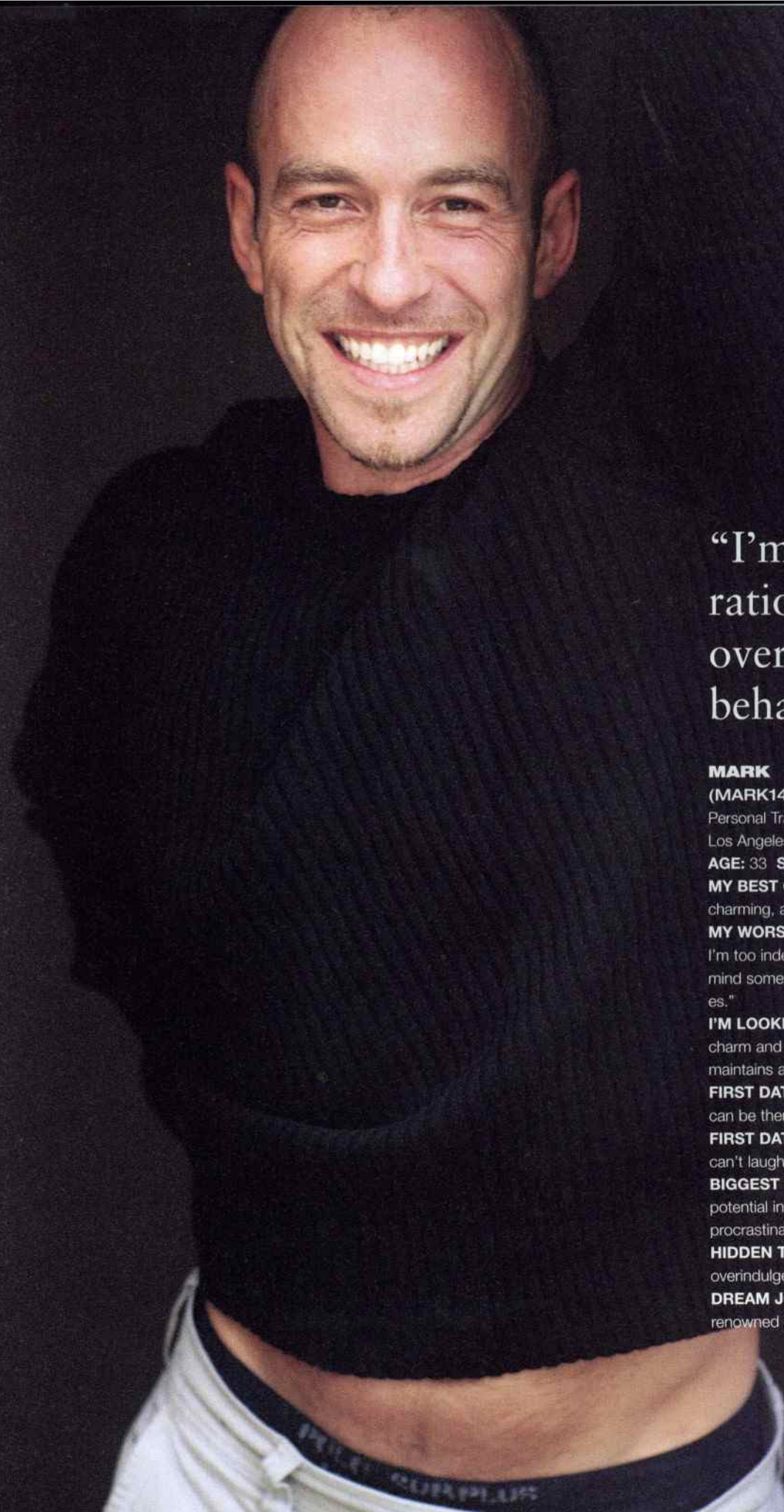
HIDDEN TALENT: "When I sing 'My Way' people say, 'Frank who?'"

DREAM FOR THE FUTURE: "That gay people will not feel ashamed of who they are when young and will not have to come out. They'll just have been gay; nothing to be ashamed or proud of."

FAVORITES: *Interview with a Vampire*, *The Color Purple*, *COPS*



GREG WEINER

A full-page photograph of a man with a shaved head and a goatee, smiling broadly. He is wearing a black, ribbed, long-sleeved sweater that is pulled up to his chest, revealing his midriff. He is also wearing white athletic pants with a black waistband. The background is dark and out of focus.

“I’m able to
rationalize
overindulgent
behavior.”

MARK

(MARK14@HEROMAG.COM)

Personal Trainer & Kickboxing Instructor
Los Angeles, CA

AGE: 33 **SIGN:** Pisces

MY BEST QUALITIES: “I’m passionate and charming, and I love to cook.”

MY WORST QUALITIES: “I’m not sure if I’m too indecisive, or if I can’t make up my mind sometimes. I also don’t like to do dishes.”

I’M LOOKING FOR A GUY WHO “exudes charm and charisma, is adventurous, yet maintains a harmonious balance in their life.”

FIRST DATE TURN-ON: “Someone who can be themselves and still make me laugh.”

FIRST DATE TURNOFF: “Someone who can’t laugh at themselves.”

BIGGEST FEAR: “That I won’t reach my potential in certain aspects of life because I procrastinate too much.”

HIDDEN TALENT: “I’m able to rationalize overindulgent behavior.”

DREAM JOB: “International, world-renowned food and wine critic.”



“Several years of martial arts have given me the ability to do the splits.”

JEREMY

(JEREMY14@HEROMAG.COM)

Software Engineer, Los Angeles, CA

AGE: 22 **SIGN:** Pisces

MY BEST QUALITIES: “I’m a great listener, and am always ready to lend a hand to a friend in need. I can be chameleon-like, always changing to fit the situation.”

MY WORST QUALITIES: “I can be pretty harsh on myself. Plus, I have a long-standing lack of organization.”

DATING PHILOSOPHY: “I’m not so sure what I want anymore, but I’m sure about what I don’t want.”

I WANT A GUY TO BE “my best friend as well as my boyfriend. Someone who has strong beliefs and opinions and who’s not afraid to stand up for them.”

BIGGEST PHOBIA: “Elevators. My friends jump up and down when we’re in elevators just to see me sweat.”

HIDDEN TALENT: “Several years of martial arts have given me the ability to do the splits.”

FAVORITES: *American Beauty*, 80’s music, *Catcher in the Rye*, *The Tao of Pooh*, macaroni & cheese

Most Eligible Bachelors 2001

ROBAIRE
(ROBAIRE14@HEROMAG.COM)

Freelance Singer

West Hollywood, CA

AGE: 37 **SIGN:** Taurus

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "My generosity, wit, and smile."

WHY YOU WON'T: "I can be too blunt and impatient at times."

MY BEST QUALITY: "The complexity of my personality, which is difficult to describe in a few words and even more difficult to pass off as a virtue."

SEXY IS: "The eyes. Think of Antonio Banderas. He looks at you and you feel desired. That is very sexy."

WHY I LIKE SINGING: "I love transforming an emotional idea into performance. When I really connect with a song it's like an out-of-body experience."

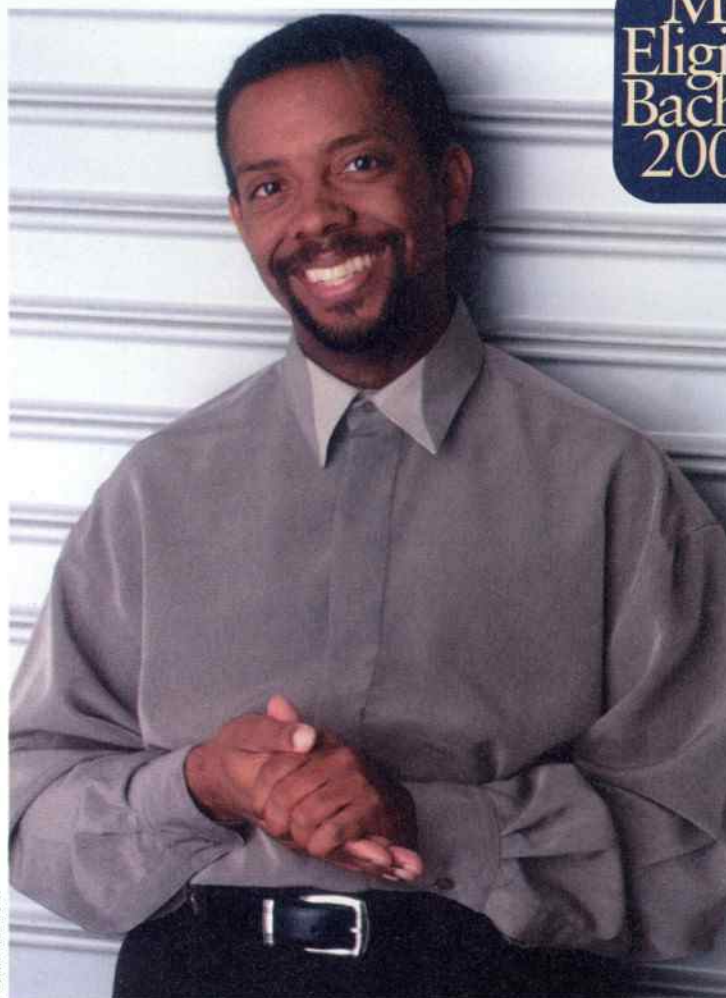
THE PROBLEM WITH DATING: "If you try too hard to meet Mr. It he won't show, so you try to relax. It's very hard to relax and suck in your tummy at the same time."

HIDDEN TALENT: "I'm a fairly decent tarot card reader and a pretty decent bowler."

BIGGEST PHOBIA: "Hospitals. I get extremely nervous and uncomfortable."

FAVORITE MOVIE: "Babe. I love when the little pig tries to sing."

JOHN SKALICKY



STAR SEARCH: WHICH BACHELOR IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

Your Sign



Aries (March 21-April 20)

Traits

Competitive, adventurous, daring, passionate

Most Compatible with

Gemini, Sagittarius, Pisces, Leo



Taurus (April 21-May 20)

Conservative, sensual, practical, possessive

Cancer, Virgo, Capricorn



Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Inquisitive, alert, restless, inventive

Aries, Leo, Libra, Aquarius



Cancer (June 21-July 20)

Cautious, intuitive, imaginative, romantic

Taurus, Virgo, Scorpio, Pisces



Leo (July 21-August 20)

Flamboyant, inspired, generous, dignified

Aries, Sagittarius, Leo



Virgo (August 21-Sept. 20)

Modest, conscientious, critical, dedicated

Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn



Libra (Sept. 21-Oct. 20)

Diplomatic, idealistic, harmonious, just

Gemini, Leo, Sagittarius, Aquarius



Scorpio (Oct. 21-Nov. 20)

Intense, courageous, reserved, perceptive

Cancer, Capricorn, Pisces



Sagittarius (Nov. 21-Dec. 20)

Honest, impulsive, optimistic, versatile

Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, Aquarius



Capricorn (Dec. 21-Jan. 20)

Practical, dependable, ambitious, sincere

Taurus, Virgo, Scorpio, Pisces



Aquarius (Jan. 21-Feb. 20)

Intellectual, eclectic, individual, humanitarian

Gemini, Sagittarius, Aries



Pisces (Feb. 21-March 20)

Imaginative, sensitive, poetic, spiritual

Aries, Cancer, Scorpio, Capricorn

Most Eligible Bachelors 2001

AARON

(AARON14@HEROMAG.COM)

Singer and Opera Development
Palm Beach, FL

AGE: 26 SIGN: Scorpio

MY BEST QUALITY: "I am very persistent and never give up on what I want to accomplish."

MY WORST QUALITY: "I'm not a very organized individual. You should take a look at my apartment!"

I LIKE A GUY WITH "a mysterious and strong personality. And intelligence. You can never get bored with an intelligent guy."

ABOUT MY PIPES: "I think I'm blessed with a good voice, but I know that to become a good opera singer talent isn't everything. You need to have very strong technique, and I am working on that."

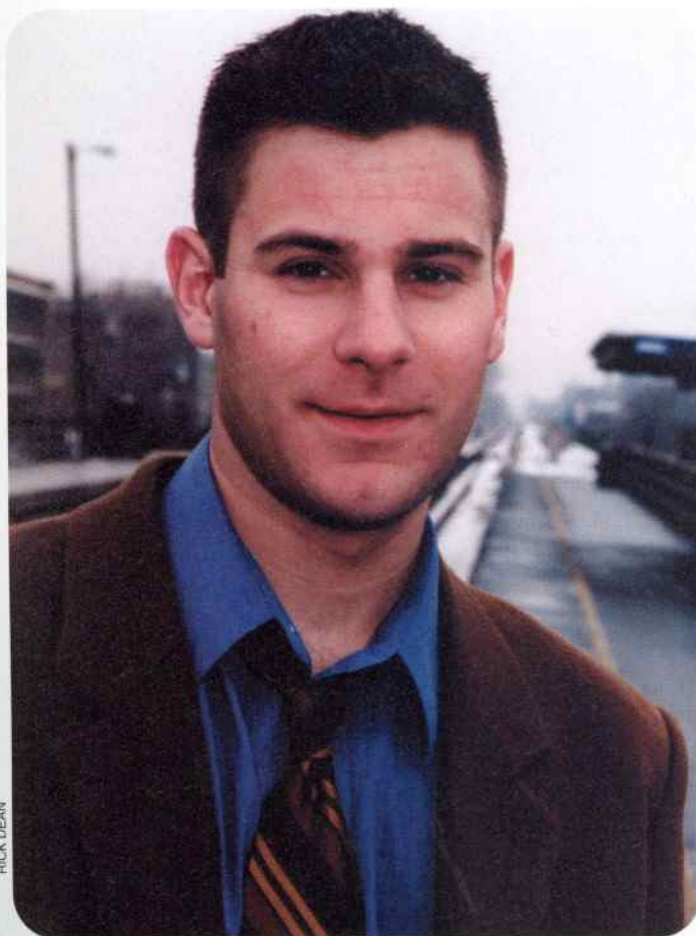
HIDDEN TALENT: "I'm a great Sunday school teacher."

LIFE WORDS: "Success is a journey, not a destination."

FAVORITES: Placido Domingo, Kathleen Battle, Rachmaninov, Jose Ingenieros



JOSH HUMBLE



RICK DEAN

STEVE

(STEVE14@HEROMAG.COM)

Student, Chicago, IL

AGE: 22 SIGN: Capricorn

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "Sincere, trustworthy, caring, and a lot of fun."

RIGHT NOW I'M "pursuing my master's degree in violin performance."

WHY I DO WHAT I DO: "I love to play and hope to perform with a major symphony orchestra. In addition, I love teaching children the violin and watching them grow."

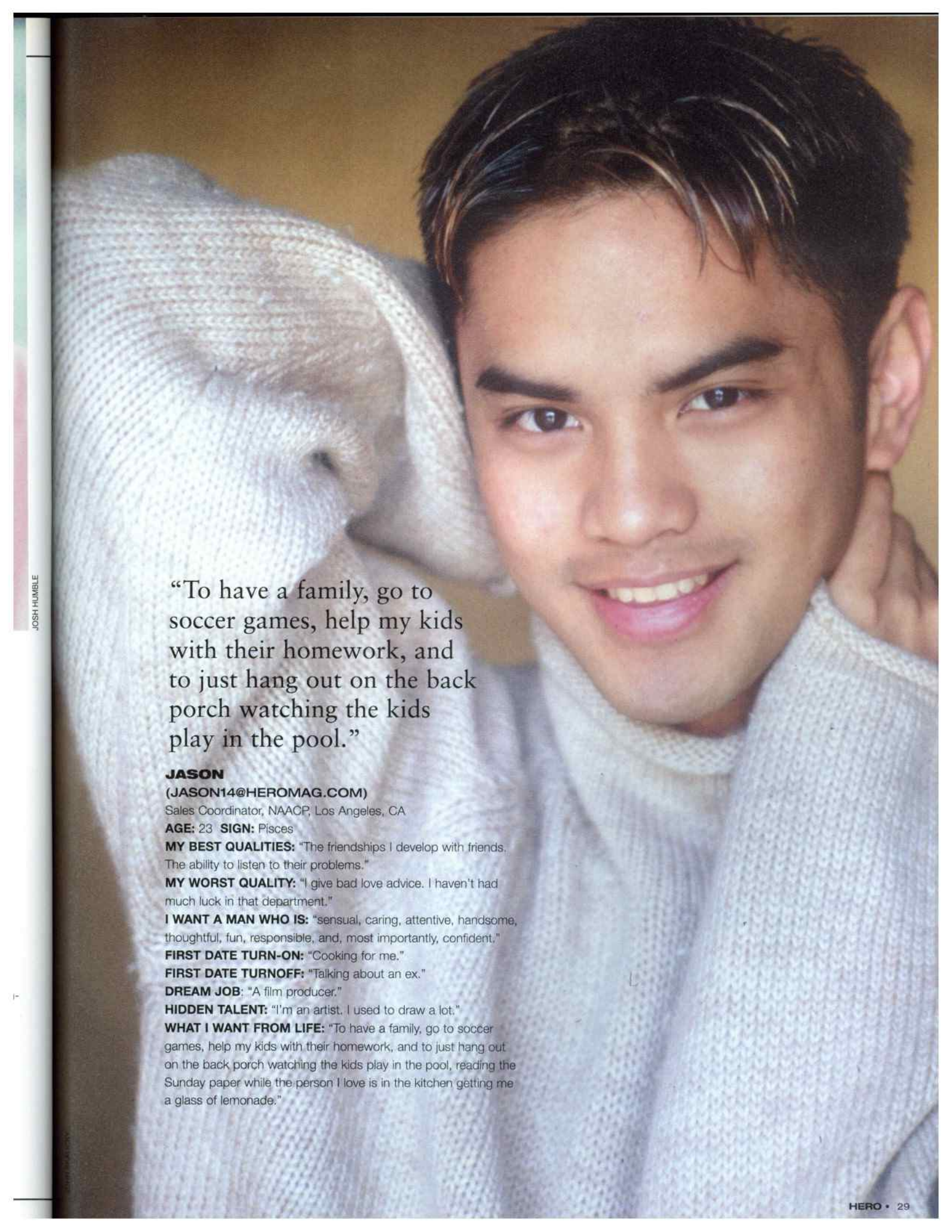
I WANT A GUY WHO "is easygoing, caring, understanding, and athletic."

FAVORITE GUY PARTS: "Eyes, thighs, and chest, as well as their hair, for some reason."

BOXERS OR BRIEFS: "I usually wear boxers unless I work out or run."

I'M FASCINATED BY "the Titanic, ever since I was about 5 years old. I have quite a few books about the ship."

FAVORITES: Smash Mouth, Beethoven's Piano Concertos, Dave, The X-Files



"To have a family, go to soccer games, help my kids with their homework, and to just hang out on the back porch watching the kids play in the pool."

JASON**(JASON14@HEROMAG.COM)**

Sales Coordinator, NAACP, Los Angeles, CA

AGE: 23 **SIGN:** Pisces**MY BEST QUALITIES:** "The friendships I develop with friends. The ability to listen to their problems."**MY WORST QUALITY:** "I give bad love advice. I haven't had much luck in that department."**I WANT A MAN WHO IS:** "sensual, caring, attentive, handsome, thoughtful, fun, responsible, and, most importantly, confident."**FIRST DATE TURN-ON:** "Cooking for me."**FIRST DATE TURNOFF:** "Talking about an ex."**DREAM JOB:** "A film producer."**HIDDEN TALENT:** "I'm an artist. I used to draw a lot."**WHAT I WANT FROM LIFE:** "To have a family, go to soccer games, help my kids with their homework, and to just hang out on the back porch watching the kids play in the pool, reading the Sunday paper while the person I love is in the kitchen getting me a glass of lemonade."



"In your 30s, many of the demons from early life can be put to rest. I've managed to do that and come to peace with who I am and who everybody else is."

BRAD

(BRAD14@HEROMAG.COM)

Sales Director, Mt. Laurel, NJ

AGE: 32 **SIGN:** Taurus

I AM "professional, down-to-earth, motivated, affectionate, and happy."

SEXY IS: "A smile. A sense of humor. A man playing Frisbee with his dog."

MY DREAM GUY IS "very masculine, but he must be able to communicate feelings."

MY PLANS FOR US "Raising a chocolate Labrador Retriever and being part of each other's family photos."

LIFE IS GOOD: "In your 30s, many of the demons from early life can be put to rest. I've managed to do that and come to peace with who I am and who everybody else is."

PEOPLE DON'T KNOW: "[As a kid] I was a classical pianist and performed concerts here and abroad."

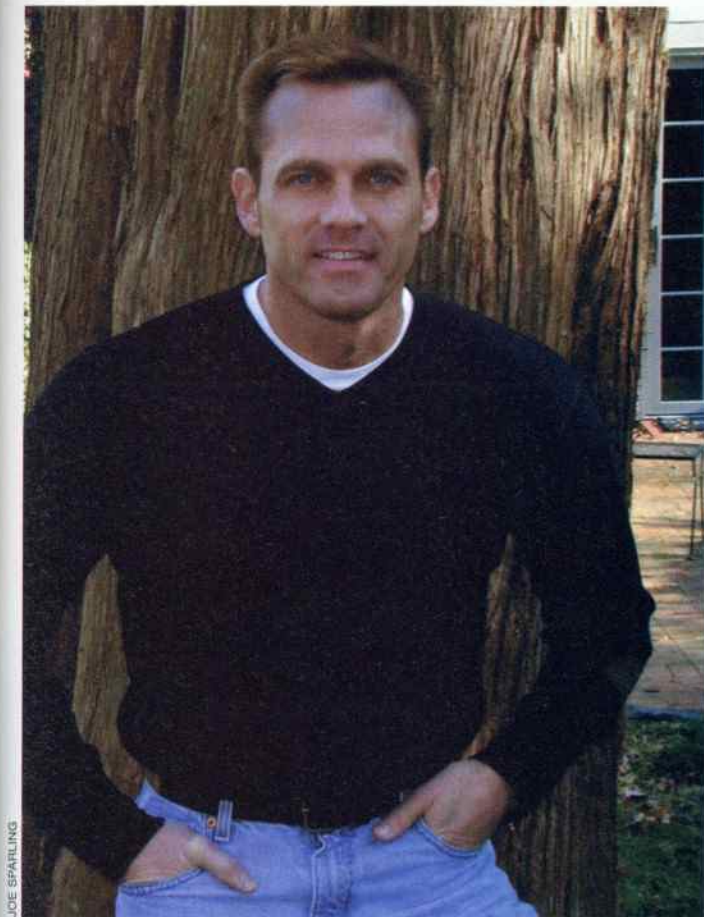
BIGGEST PHOBIA: "Guns. And bees!"

DREAM JOB: "Exotic automobile broker and part-time beach bum."

BINGE FOOD: "Buffalo wings and French fries."

FAVORITES: Tori Amos, Moby, *Clueless*, *Will & Grace*, *South Park*

Most Eligible Bachelors 2001



JOE SPARTLING

BRETT

(BRETT14@HEROMAG.COM)

Sales and Marketing, Raleigh, North Carolina

AGE: 39 SIGN: Aries

MY BEST QUALITY: "Compassion for my fellow man and knowing that people's hearts are fundamentally good."

MY WORST QUALITY: "Being hard on myself."

SEXY IS: "The feeling that follows absolute desire and longing. Not just sex, but to be near them, smell them, touch them and know that you are as special to them as they are to you."

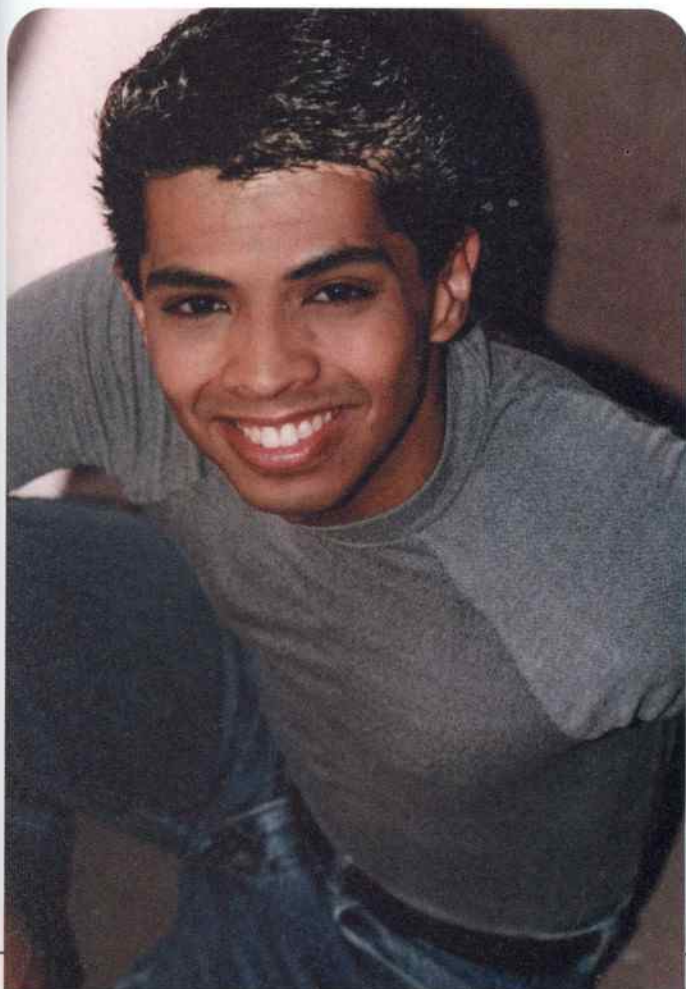
MY IDEAL MAN IS "well-rounded, comfortable with himself, caring, funny, and kind."

ON LIFE: "I've been HIV+ since last June. It's been a hard but rewarding journey, really just beginning for me in many ways."

IN MY GUY'S HEART: "Character, loyalty, and honesty."

BINGE FOOD: "Pizza and ice cream."

FAVORITES: Enya, Evita, Mozart, *Terms of Endearment*, *Pretty Woman*



JOEL

(JOEL14@HEROMAG.COM)

Actor/singer/dancer, Orlando, FL

AGE: 29 SIGN: Cancer

WHY YOU'LL LOVE ME: "My ability to see the good in most people. No matter what life has in store, I strive to make the most of it, laugh, and smile."

WHY YOU WON'T: "I procrastinate. I'm very bad with money. I can be overly emotional."

WHY THAT'S OKAY: "I am far from perfect, but it's my flaws that build my character and make me me."

SEXY IS: "A gaze that I can get lost in that melts my outer walls. Great legs and butt don't hurt either."

MY GUY NEEDS "the ability to make me laugh and feel special with a look, a touch, or a kiss."

TURNOFF: "Cockiness, vulgar behavior, bad hygiene."

BIGGEST PHOBIA: "Snakes!"

WHAT THE ARTS MEAN TO ME: "Someone once asked me what I would do if I weren't performing. 5 years later I still have no reply."

MY MANTRA: "Learn from yesterday. Live for today. Dream for tomorrow."

FAVORITES: *The Sixth Sense*, *The Jungle Book*

Most Eligible Bachelors 2001



JOHN SKALICKY

GARRETT

(GARRETT14@HEROMAG.COM)

Actor & Waiter, West Hollywood, CA

AGE: 26 **SIGN:** Pisces

MY BEST QUALITIES: "Loyalty, punctuality, out-going, cooperative."

MY WORST QUALITIES: "Sometimes I procrastinate, and sometimes my temptations get me into trouble."

I WANT A MAN WHO "believes in me, trusts me, and has only good intentions."

A GUY IS HOT WHEN HE "is genuine."

TURN-ONS: "Someone who is motivated and driven to meet their goals. Someone who I can admire."

BIGGEST PHOBIA: "To die in a plane crash."

FAVORITES: Toni Braxton, Dido, Madonna, *Muscle & Fitness*, *The Graduate*, *American Beauty*



GREG WEINER

TOMAS

(TOMAS14@HEROMAG.COM)

Foreign Policy researcher, New York, NY

AGE: 23 **SIGN:** Scorpio

MY BEST QUALITIES: "Straightforwardness and patience."

SEXY IS: "Making out on a Sunday morning with *The New York Times* all over the bed."

I WANT A MAN WHO HAS "Integrity. Gripping eyes are a plus, too."

MY GUY SHOULD BE "Someone who doesn't take life for granted, who isn't afraid to live to the fullest, who is passionate about work, love and interests."

IT'LL BE GREAT: "Going shopping at Crate & Barrel. Many road trips together. Going to Miami for him to meet my parents."

FIRST DATE TURN-ON: "Flowers, carefully chosen and color-coordinated."

FIRST DATE TURNOFF: "Too much tongue on a first kiss."

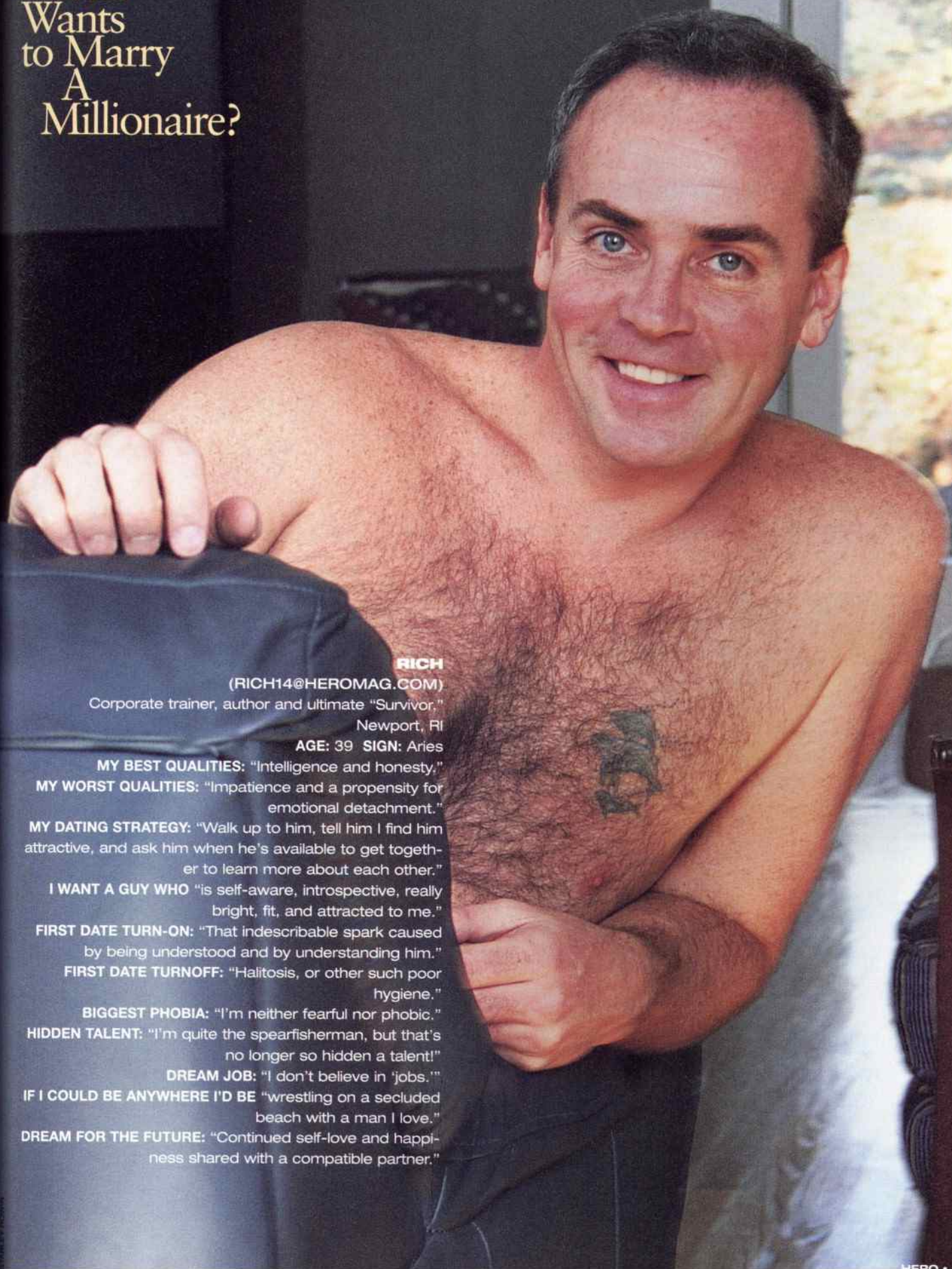
MY BIGGEST FEARS: "Loneliness and co-dependence."

LIFE HAS BEEN "A fantastic journey from the days when I was closeted and engaged to a girlfriend at 18."

COMFORT FOOD: "Plain pasta with lots of butter."

FAVORITES: Lauryn Hill, Samuel Barber, Pet Shop Boys, *Being There*, *Will & Grace*

Who Wants to Marry A Millionaire?



RICH

(RICH14@HEROMAG.COM)

Corporate trainer, author and ultimate "Survivor,"

Newport, RI

AGE: 39 **SIGN:** Aries

MY BEST QUALITIES: "Intelligence and honesty."

MY WORST QUALITIES: "Impatience and a propensity for emotional detachment."

MY DATING STRATEGY: "Walk up to him, tell him I find him attractive, and ask him when he's available to get together to learn more about each other."

I WANT A GUY WHO "is self-aware, introspective, really bright, fit, and attracted to me."

FIRST DATE TURN-ON: "That indescribable spark caused by being understood and by understanding him."

FIRST DATE TURNOFF: "Halitosis, or other such poor hygiene."

BIGGEST PHOBIA: "I'm neither fearful nor phobic."

HIDDEN TALENT: "I'm quite the spearfisherman, but that's no longer so hidden a talent!"

DREAM JOB: "I don't believe in 'jobs.'"

IF I COULD BE ANYWHERE I'D BE "wrestling on a secluded beach with a man I love."

DREAM FOR THE FUTURE: "Continued self-love and happiness shared with a compatible partner."

Get Personals

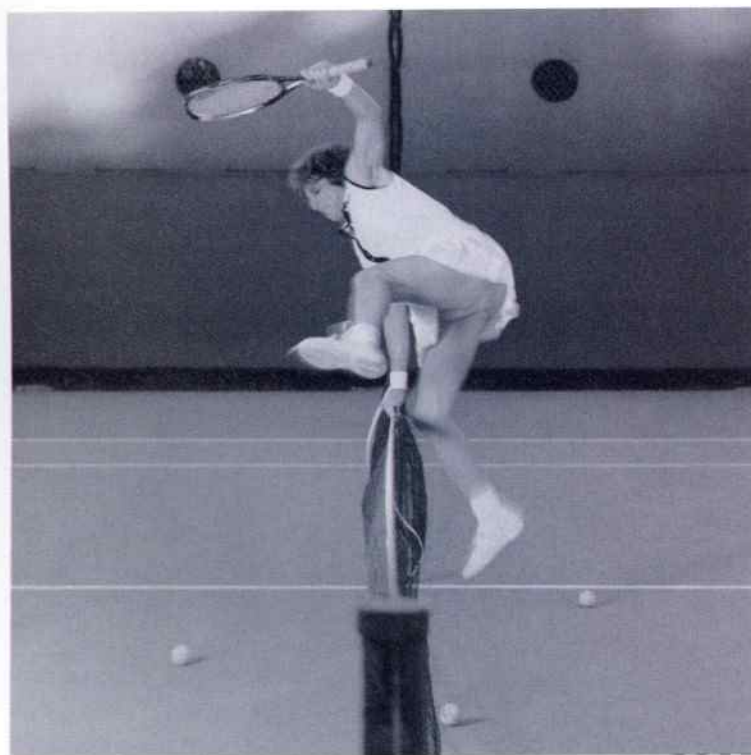
Wanted: Hot, sweaty reader with sense of humor who likes to giggle and stare at people...

Don't lie. Even if you've never placed a personals ad, you've thought about it. Then you may have changed your mind. As Bruce Vilanch says, personals are "the last refuge of the romantic, one stop shy of the slippery railing of a high bridge," and who wants to feel like they're down to their last resort? The people in Michael C. Smith's *Personals*, that's who.

For his book, Smith scoured the personals for interesting and outlandish ads, then asked the people who placed them if they'd allow themselves to be photographed. The result is a fascinating collection of real ads and witty wink-wink portraits of their authors. The kooky subjects show an uncommon bravery and honesty in allowing themselves to be photographed, and Mr. Smith does a great job of capturing the humor and strange nobility in their quest for love, however creepy, strange, or funny it might be. Searching for "the one" remains the world's biggest riddle, but at least these people seem to be in on the joke.



DO YOU HAVE A HAIRPIECE?
 *Oops. Do you have herpes? SWM, 26, 6'1", blond/blue, model type. Silly, stylish, into everything but these ads, looking for the same. Life is much easier with a lover. Call Box #62317. ☎




TENNIS-PLAYING CROSS-DRESSER
 seeks female partner to share erotic fun times. I'm 44, 5'11", 175 lbs., blond/blue. I only occasionally cross-dress and I'm fairly passable, but not effeminate. Be open-minded and experimental. Age open. Call Box #08257. ☎



w/out a partner. Call Box #84752. ☎

TICKLE PARTY GUY

Very good-looking WM 33, 6', 175 lbs., br/br masc in-shape available for tickle parties. Have been tied up & tickled by groups of guys & can't get enough. You must be normal, look, sound & act masculine. DISCREET ONLY. Call Box #86511. ☎

LOVING COUPLE

Real Men Only!

UNDERWEAR MODEL

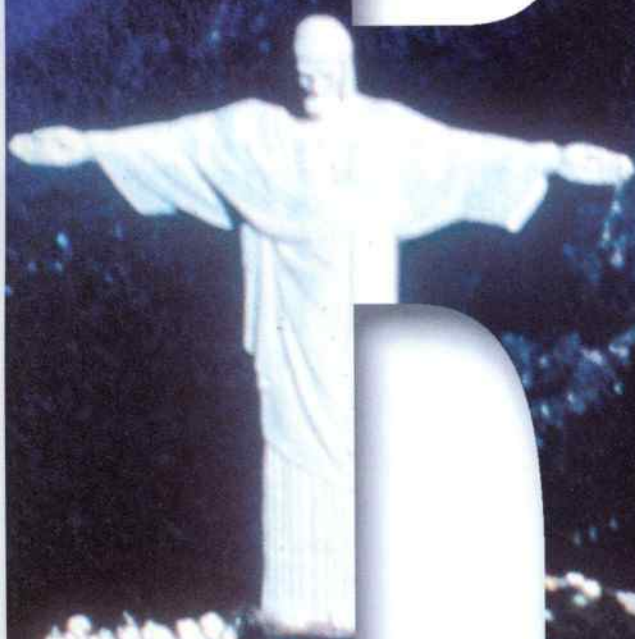
lives near me. Tall, attractive, funny, easygoing, 30, SWM seeks thin, intelligent, creative female with a good sense of humor and love for animals. Call Box #96336. ☎

SWAGGERING



travel

Flying down to





**With sand,
sunshine
and samba,
Rio de
Janeiro
invites you
to join in its
magical
mystique**

**BY
MATTHEW
LINK**

The Tijuca
National
Forest (the

largest urban forest in the world, full of toucans, sloths, and wild butterflies) slopes upward as a green cloak behind Rio de Janeiro. The immense Christ statue on Corcovado forms a protective cross high above, reverently gazing over the city and its inhabitants. Blessed with year-round Floridian weather and lined by wide, graceful beaches and a calm Atlantic, this is one city that can claim to be even grander than its postcard images, and more glamorous than the songs written for it.

But what you really feel of Rio are her people. Warm, embracing, and amazingly easy-going, Rio's residents (called *Cariocas*.) become your friends with little effort. How they remain happy and carefree through Brazil's many turmoils is a lesson in personal contentment. They



are shaded by a myriad of ethnicities, which seem to blend smoothly into a respectful mosaic with few racial tensions. The fact that most of the men prefer tight swimsuits and look as if they've just come back from a Calvin Klein or Gucci casting call doesn't hurt.

Rio's reputation as a dangerous city has changed with tough-on-crime mayors and new tourist police in kiosks throughout the tourist areas. Poorer neighborhoods have been renovated, and the local visitors bureau is enticing gay travelers. In fact, Rio is one of the most liberal spots in South America for gays to live out and proud, and they easily blend into the fabric of the city. Although Brazil has made great strides in recent years, the economy can still be shaky, and illiteracy, prostitution, and drugs remain problems. What's refreshing is that Rio's populace makes no effort to hide or ignore their problems, but speaks of them freely. Unflinching honesty is in their blood.

Discovered by Europeans in 1502, and briefly owned by the French, Rio is steeped in history older than that found in the U.S. In 1808, it even served as the capital of Portugal and her colonies—the only time a European country was ruled from the Americas. In recent years the government has invested a considerable amount of time and money in restoring the area known as the Cultural Corridor in the heart of downtown Rio, which includes an impressive Imperial Palace built in 1743.

With gay establishments sprinkled throughout the city, there is no real gay center, but Rua Frame de Amoedo near Ipanema gay beach

Bofetada comes close. Rua Teixeira de Melo is also lined with a handful of gay places. The Botafogo district a little further away from the tourist areas offers neighborhood gay bars as well. Street prostitution is rampant in Rio, tolerated out of practicality by the police, and

includes a smattering of young men and many transvestites. It goes without saying that this form of tourist adventure is dangerous, which is precisely why most hotels will not allow unregistered visitors.

Of course, there is no shortage of men on the beaches, working out at the outdoor gym facilities generously built by the government, or jogging along the wide beach promenades of Copacabana and Ipanema. Blessed with warm temperatures, Rio's life

revolves around its spectacular outdoor setting. Besides the obligatory cable car trips up to Sugar Loaf and a hike up the steps to the 125-foot Christ the Redeemer statue, there are many less obvious outdoor excursions to be had. Named the ecological capital of the world in 1992, Rio offers rock climbing, hang gliding from its steep cliffs, overnight trekking in a national park, surfing along the beaches, and a world class Botanical Garden.

Where to Sleep?

Lambda Brazil (168 SE 1st Street #1100, Miami, FL 33131; 305/373 2023; toll free 666/252 6232; info@lambdabrazil.com) is a com-

pany owned by friendly gay Brazilians who specialize in gay tours of the country, including Rio, and who can help with accommodations. Rio has no all-gay hotels, but most are gay-friendly.

Le Meridien Hotel (Avenida Atlantica, 1020; +55/21-546-0840) is one of the nicest bets, and peers over Copacabana

Beach with unbeatable views. Like most hotels in this snazzy chain, this one comes with amenities like an outdoor pool with views, a sauna, two inspired restaurants (including one of the best French restaurants in Brazil), a courteous English-speaking staff, and proximity to the gay-popular section of the beach.

The Copacabana Palace Hotel (Avenida Atlantica, 4240; +55/21-255-7070; copacabanapalace.orient-express.com) directly fronts the gay portion of the beach. Hosting film stars and heads of state for decades, this grand dame more than fulfills any tropical dream you may have had about Rio de Janeiro. In fact, the '30s musical fantasy *Flying Down to Rio* with Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers was filmed here. Some of the 400 rooms offer majestic balconies overlooking the ocean, and the hotel has every luxurious amenity a prince or princess could imagine.

Kicking Up Your Heels

Vinicius (Rua Vinicius de Moraes, 39, Ipanema; +55/21-287-1497) came into existence after many locals complained there was no place to hear live Bossa Nova (a kind of Latin jazz), despite the music having originated here (along with the hyper-paced, Carnival-drenched Samba). This cool, upstairs lounge attracts a high-class crowd that spend hours listening to the mellow rhythms. The café **A Gorta de Ipanema** directly across the street is the spot where "The Girl From Ipanema" was written at one of its tables. Like many *botecobars* in Rio, this one is open-air and super casual, making it easy for people of different classes and backgrounds to mix. As for nightlife, things rev up late, as they do in all of Rio. **Colosseo** (Rua Teixeira de Melo, 21, Ipanema; +55/21-267-1727; barcolosseo@ig.com.br) is a gay and lesbian



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Citizens stroll in the shadow of one of Rio's majestic mountains.

two-level bar with a young, happy crowd, a tiny upstairs dance floor playing disco faves, and a downstairs stucco lounge. Entrance fee and drinks are tallied on a card and paid upon exiting. A few doors down is **Galeria Cafe** (Rua Teixeira de Melo, 31, Ipanema; +55/21-523-8250; galeriacafe.com.br), a popular hot spot with a slightly older crowd than Colosseo, and an eclectic, upscale interior where cult videos, readings of plays, exhibitions, performances, bazaars, and book releases take place. **Le Boy Bar** (Rua Raul Pompéia, 102, Copacabana; +55/21-521-0367) has been around for a long time, but that doesn't take away from its popularity as the energetic, young place to dance your butt off—or watch the talented go-go boys dance theirs off instead.

¡Ay, la comida!

Rio is said to have over 860 restaurants, and they cover the whole spectrum of the country's harmonious ethnicities. Try one of the *churrascaria* or *rodízio* restaurants where brawny waiters haul over-

sized skewers full of beef and pork to your table, grab a carving knife, and slice the delectable meats directly on to your plate. **Marius** (Avenida Atlântica, 290, Leme; +55/21-542-2393; marius.com.br), at one end of Copacabana Beach, is an upscale version of this type of eatery, even though it's decorated with burlap sacks for table cloths, wooden dressers, barrels, buckets of grain, and Brazilian folk art. A sumptuous buffet which includes squid, sun-dried vegetables, powdered roots, tuna, and salmon compliment the mounds of meat. The famous Brazilian dish *feijoada* is a tasty and heavy meat stew of black beans and pork, which will put you immediately to sleep. Originally concocted by slaves, it's served in a clay pot and traditionally eaten on Saturdays. **Casa da Feijoada** (Rua Prudente de Moraes, 10B, Ipanema; +55/21-523-4994; cozinhatipica.com.br) is a small, friendly restaurant where you can sample this local staple.

Outdoor juice kiosks/bars abound everywhere you turn—give in and take a sip. Any fruit in season is squeezed into a nutritious beverage, and you can usually find the juice

bars by the sweet green coconuts hanging from their walls. Check out the beachfront kiosk flying a rainbow flag directly in front of the Copacabana Palace Hotel—it's adjacent to the gay beach, so you may find tasty local fruits hanging around as well! For juices of a heavier sort, try *batida*, a drink made from sugarcane alcohol and fresh fruit juice, or just skip the juice and go straight for the popular *caipirinha*—sugarcane rum laced with limes and drunk like water throughout the city.

The Mother of All Parties

Rio and Carnival are interlinked like passionate lovers—no other city in the world, not even New Orleans, keeps the rhythm and atmosphere of Carnival year-round like Rio. The beat and vibe of the festival are always underlying moods in the city, like a distant song you can't get out of your head. And if you are lucky enough to come to Rio during Carnival, you simply won't believe your eyes: Nearly 50,000 people parade and are watched



Drink a cup of Joe at Colombo Coffeehouse



by a crowd of 80,000. Things start to heat up four or five days before Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent—but get your tickets to the competitions (which are as fierce as any soccer match) when they go on sale in November or December. The top samba schools hold “rehearsals” (more like loosely organized par-

ties) months before Carnaval, which the public can attend and shake the night away to the hyper rhythms. Of course, drag is big during Carnaval, as well as men wearing flashy next-to-nothing outfits. Carnaval is full of balls, with *O Grande Gala Gay* being the main gay one, full of exotic transvestites, and it's extremely straight-popular. Be sure to catch Carmen Miranda's Band—a large Sunday parade of mostly gay men dressed as the energetic, beloved daughter of the city. Speaking of which, a must-see is the **Carmen Miranda museum** (Parque Brigadeiro Eduardo Gomes, +55/21-551-2597, closed on Mondays) built in a circular hall and housing this joyful woman's outrageous dresses, headgear, and impossible platform shoes, as well as movie memorabilia. Nowhere is there a picture of this jubilant firecracker with a frown on her face.

Soccer

Soccer (or *futebol* in Brazil) is the world's most popular sport, it's a fast, furious, and exciting sport, with sprinting players who are nothing less than national heroes (remember Pele?)—and they wear very cute shorts to boot. It's no coincidence that green

and yellow (team colors) are also found on the Brazilian flag. Brazilians have won the World Cup five times, most recently in 1994. Maracana Stadium is one of the world's largest, seating 200,000 crazy spectators who sing and chant to the game like an entire jungle in chorus. Most matches happen on Sundays, and if Argentina (Brazil's long-time soccer foe) is the opposing team that week, believe me, you'll know it by the loudspeakers and public TVs set up in the squares and plazas. 📺

Matthew Link is an editor for *Out & About*, a great source for gay travel information at outandabout.com.



(BSPV credit - Photos by Raymond Vise © 1999 Blue Door Productions, Inc.)



**Don't miss Kate Clinton
on this RSVP cruise!**



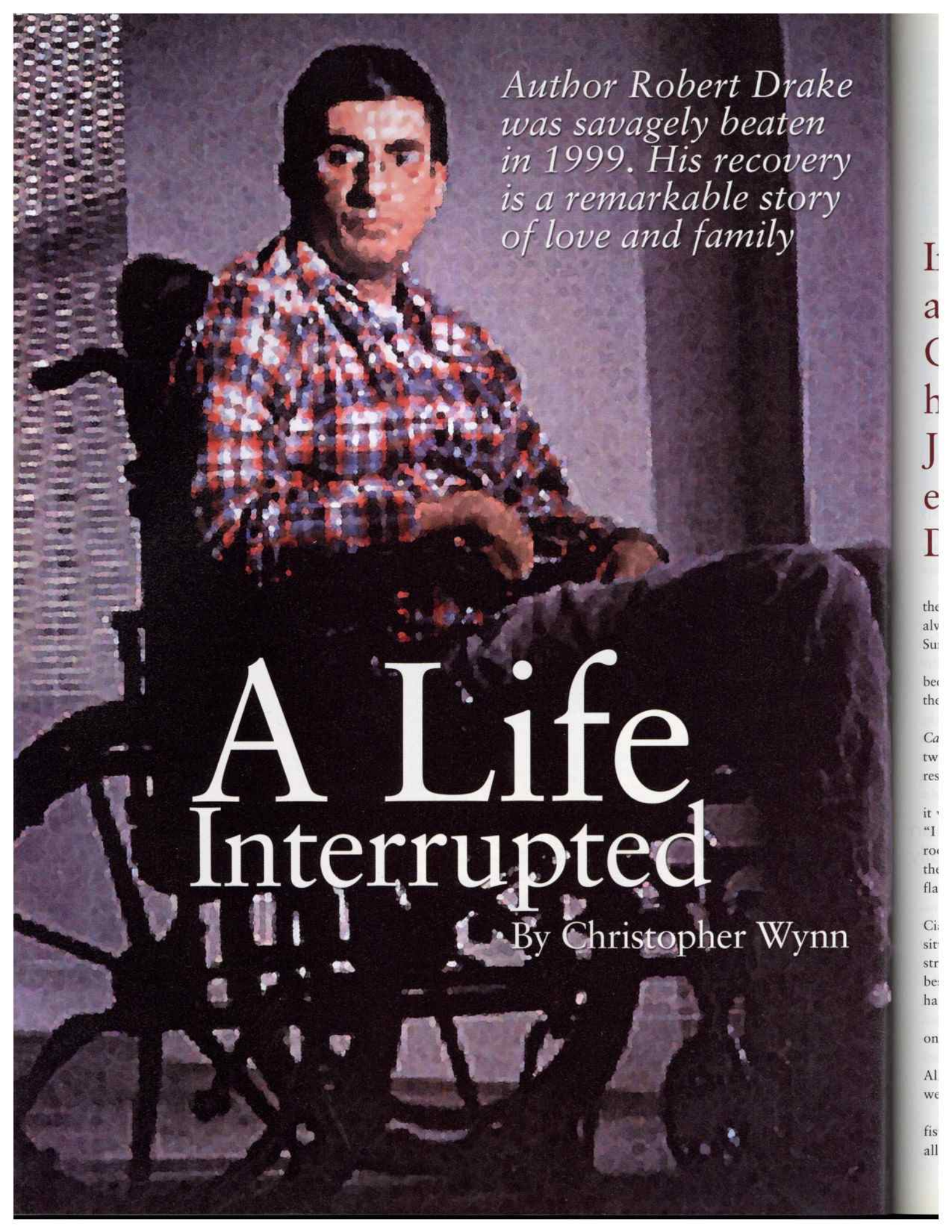
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Experience the extraordinary freedom and camaraderie of a vacation with RSVP. Grab your hero, and join us on our Mayan Sun Cruise March 17-26, 2001 sailing from Galveston to the Yucatan and Honduras. See your travel agent.

www.RsvpVacations.com

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A photograph of a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a red, white, and blue plaid shirt. He is sitting in a dark-colored wheelchair, looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

*Author Robert Drake
was savagely beaten
in 1999. His recovery
is a remarkable story
of love and family*

A Life Interrupted

By Christopher Wynn

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“As I approached the house, I remember being distinctly aware that something was different,” reflects 27 year-old Irishman, Ciaran Slevin. It is a cold, but sunny afternoon in the courtyard at Moss Rehabilitation Center in Philadelphia, the city Ciaran now calls home. He continues recounting the events of January 31, 1999 in Sligo, Ireland, when he discovered his then-boyfriend, author/editor Robert Drake, beaten almost to death.

“I noticed the lights in the front room and the upstairs part of the house were all off, which was very irregular. Robert would always have several lights on and music playing. Especially on a Sunday evening,” says Ciaran.

He would know—the attractive young Irishman and Robert had been almost inseparable since meeting at Dublin’s The George pub the previous year. Ciaran, was a recent medical school graduate.

Robert Drake, the Philadelphia-based author of *The Gay Canon: Great Books Every Gay Man Should Read* and co-editor of two award-winning gay literary anthologies, was in Ireland researching a new novel.

“I went to open the front door and was surprised to find that it was unlocked. That’s when I became concerned,” says Ciaran. “I pushed the door open and walked inside.” While the sitting room lights were out, there was enough light streaming in from the kitchen to allow Ciaran to see that the furniture in Robert’s flat was broken and everything was in chaos.

“I began trembling and my heart started racing,” recalls Ciaran. “I stepped further inside. There is a long wall in the main sitting area, and on the entire length of that wall, there was a streak...a single, 10-foot long streak of blood.” On the floor beside the wall lay the remnants of a porcelain table lamp, which had been smashed into pieces.

Ciaran dropped his things and ran towards the kitchen, the only source of light.

“Inside the kitchen, I saw the dining table turned upside down. All of the chairs had been shoved or knocked out of place and were laying on their sides,” he says.

As Ciaran tries to continue, his eyes well up and he makes a fist, but he continues in a controlled, even tone, “There was blood all over the kitchen; as if it were a slaughterhouse. There was

blood on the ceiling, there was blood covering the walls. My god, those walls used to be white.” Tears finally stream down Ciaran’s face.

“I saw Robert hunched over on the floor beside the cooker [stove]. He was gripping bloody cushions from the sofa. I rushed to him, terrified that it might be too late, and touched him. He stirred slightly and tried to say something, but his speech was horribly slurred. Then I noticed that the blood covering his face and his head was congealed and crusted, and I knew that he been lying there for hours, possibly since the night before.” Ciaran knew he needed to act quickly to save Robert’s life.

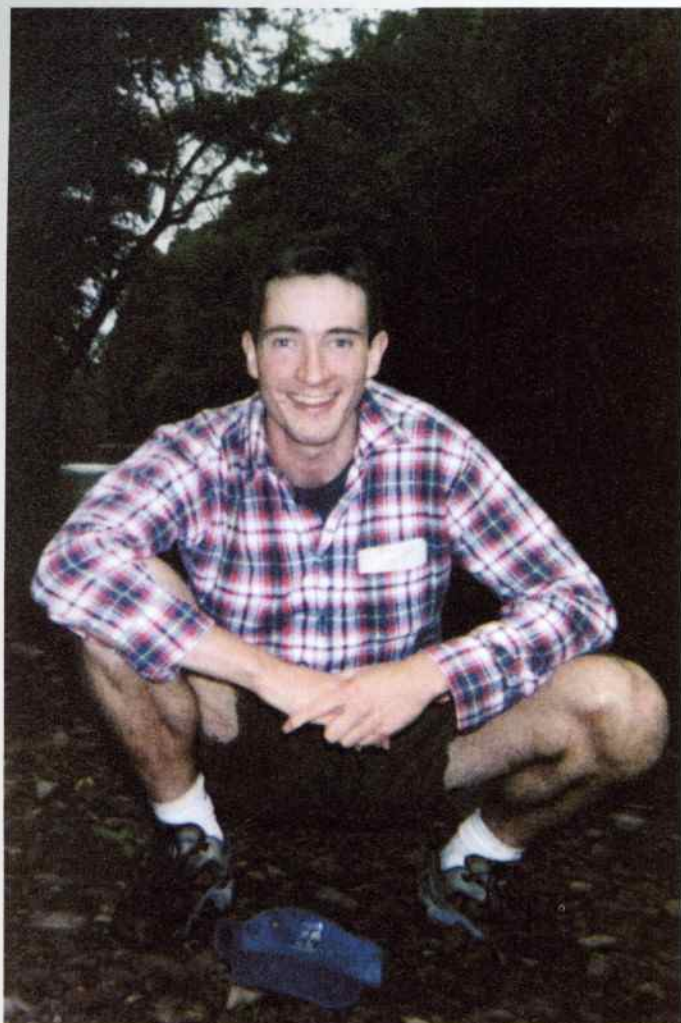
“I kept talking to him, trying to keep him conscious,” Ciaran recalls. “I was so frightened at that moment, wondering what had happened, and were we even alone in the house? Finally, my medical experience kicked in and I went onto automatic pilot, which is the only way you can get through a shock like that and not go hysterical. I checked Robert’s pulse and tried to ensure his throat was clear. His eyes were so swollen and bloody, I couldn’t even see his pupils.”

As Ciaran worked, he began weeping and yelling at Robert, demanding to know who had done this to him.

“He just kept slurring something over and over to me, which I couldn’t understand at first,” says Ciaran. In a moment, however, he did. Robert was repeating over and over in a voice that was barely recognizable: *I love you.*

REVELATIONS

Hours later, Robert was in critical condition at Sligo General Hospital. Ciaran was told that Robert’s head injuries were more severe than first thought. A CT scan would soon reveal that Robert had suffered internal bleeding in the brain and was essentially



Ciaran Slevin, Robert Drake's former boyfriend

in a coma. Ciaran finally decided to call his parents, who did not even know that he was gay.

"My mother and father drove up to Sligo General right away" says Ciaran.

Ciaran gathered his parents into one of the private rooms that the emergency center kept prepared for families. Immediately his parents could tell that he was disproportionately upset over what

"I told them I was gay, that I had been going out with Robert, that he had been attacked and was now incredibly ill, and I needed their help both logistically and emotionally."

they assumed was a casual friend. "I told them everything in the space of a minute or two," he says. "I told them I was gay, that I had been going out with Robert, that he had been attacked and was now incredibly ill, and I needed their help both logistically and emotionally."

Ciaran's mother burst into tears and there was a long, awkward moment. Ciaran's dad slowly stepped over to his son, looked him steadily in the eyes, and wrapped his arms tightly around his boy's lean frame. Mr. Slevin then looked over at his wife and told her that Ciaran needed their support right now. She nodded and came over to embrace him also, telling her son that no matter what happened, she loved him unconditionally.

Ciaran now had the emotional support and presence of mind to

make one other important call that night. Excusing himself, he found a private phone and made a transatlantic call to a man in the United States, a Philadelphia doctor named E. Scott Pretorius. Scott, whom he had never met or spoken with before, was Robert's former American partner of six years; the man whom Robert had broken up with months earlier to be with Ciaran.

UNCOMMON ALLIANCE

"Robert had told me early on that he was involved with Scott, that they lived together and had been a couple for almost six years, but had separated before he came to Ireland."

In fact, Robert's trip across the Atlantic had been as much for assessing his life and relationship with Scott as it was a writing expedition.

Robert had chosen Ireland because of an interesting case of conjoined twins there that he wanted to research for a possible novel. While in Ireland, Robert continued to email Scott almost daily from his rented apartment in Dublin. Robert mentioned a new friend he had made named Ciaran, but was reluctant to admit they had fallen in love.

When Robert's original travel visa expired three months later and he returned to the states, Scott and Robert ended their relationship and opted to develop a new friendship instead.

Three months later, Robert had sold his literary practice, wrapped up his financial affairs and filed the paperwork necessary to relocate to Ireland for good. This would be the last time Scott would see Robert as he knew him, before an early morning phone call from Ciaran on February 1, 1999 would bring all three men together under extraordinary circumstances.

After hearing the news, Scott, a doctor himself, made arrangements for Robert to be airlifted to Beaumont Hospital in Dublin, which was the country's best center for brain injury. He also spoke with Robert's parents in Charleston, both of whom were now in their 70s and too frail to travel. They empowered Scott, in consultation with them, to make Robert's pressing medical decisions.

After arranging for a leave of absence at the hospital where he worked, Scott flew overnight to Dublin. He still had his luggage as he made his way through the maze of hospital corridors towards the neuro-intensive care room where Drake's bed was. Standing there was Ciaran: a younger man with Irish blond-red hair and a

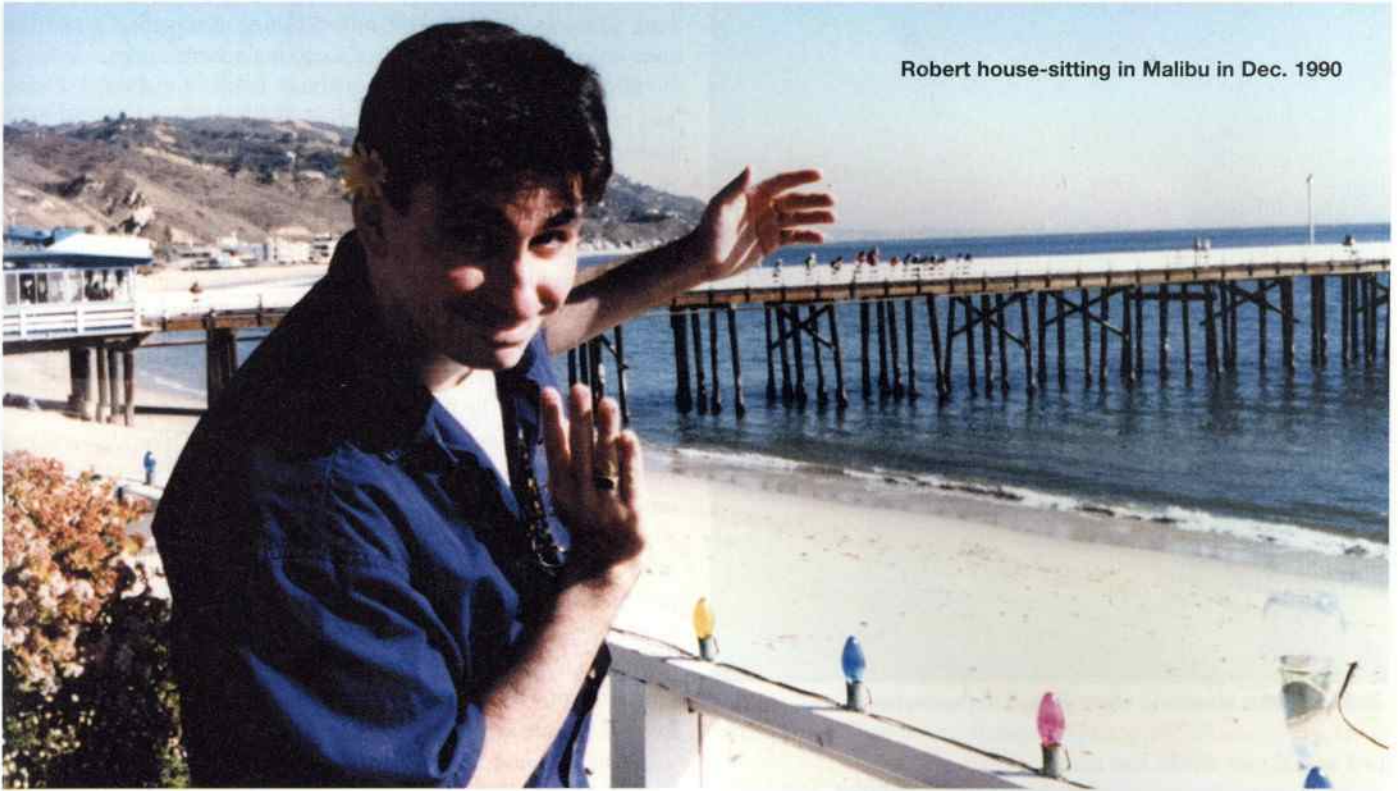
swimmer's build. Scott greeted Ciaran cordially; there would be time to deal with emotions later. Right now, Robert was the only thing on anyone's mind.

Scott looked down at the frail and unconscious man kept alive by a ventilator and a multitude of other devices. He tried to bring back a mental image of the vital man he used to know, used to love, but that seemed like a distant memory right now. In fact, as the doctors fought to keep Robert stabilized, the question in everyone's mind was: Who did this to Robert and why?

JUSTICE

Several days after Robert Drake was discovered beaten, Ian Monaghan, 20, and Glen Mahon, 21, both natives of Sligo,

Robert house-sitting in Malibu in Dec. 1990



approached the local authorities, accompanied by their lawyer. The two young men wanted to make a statement regarding their encounter with the American writer.

According to *The Irish Times*, the two men said that they had walked past Robert's Holborn Street flat at approximately 4 a.m. on January 31. They noticed Robert sitting outside on the front steps, and asked him if they could bum a cigarette. Robert reportedly told them that he didn't smoke cigarettes, but he could offer them some fine cigars.

All three men then went inside Robert's flat. They said Robert put on some upbeat music, and soon the men were drinking flaming Sambuca shots and gin. Glen said he went upstairs to use the bathroom, leaving Ian alone in the living room with Robert. Ian commented that he felt "groggy and half-steamed," and that when he reached over to get something, Robert made a pass at him.

"Straight away I said to myself, this fellow is a queer," said Ian, in his official statement. Ian said he then grabbed Robert's arm, and the two of them staggered into the kitchen. Ian said he was "roaring and cursing" at Robert the entire time.

Ian said he then fell down onto his stomach on the kitchen floor, and Robert collapsed on top of him. He said he screamed at him, "Fuck-off you queer," and remembered hitting Robert two or three times in the face. He said he tried hitting Robert as hard as he could, but was unable to get "a right thump at him."

Glen said he returned from the bathroom, saw what was happening, and immediately jumped in. Glen said he hit Robert with "a belt of his fist, straight into the nose." The men claim that Robert tried to stand up, but they pushed him back down onto the kitchen floor. They added that his nose was bleeding heavily. The men denied kicking Robert in the head or using any implement to beat him.

Glen would later admit that, before he and Ian had fled, he also took \$10 from Robert's billfold and tossed the wallet into the fireplace. The men said that they could hear Robert moaning and call-

ing out as they left the flat.

Since Robert was still lying unconscious in a critical care unit, Sligo Authorities were unable to obtain his account of what had happened. Even today, almost two years after the attack, Robert currently retains no memory of the incident. Police would have to rely on forensic and medical evidence for the truth, and what they gathered painted a much more violent picture than the one described by the two men.

At Robert's flat, blood spatters covered most of the downstairs area, including the ceiling. A broken lamp was examined as a possible implement and other shattered furniture was looked at.

Most damning of all, however, was Robert's physical condition. Doctors reported that Robert had sustained injuries equivalent to smashing his head into a car windshield at 60 miles per hour—on both sides of his skull. One eye socket was fractured, causing swelling and bruising characterized as "raccoon eyes." Robert's clothing had been so encrusted with blood that they had to be cut off of his body.

Ciaran rejects the claims that Robert made a pass at them. "Don't forget that Robert was very far from home and there were times that I would be working long hours or be on call, so he was interested in building other friendships. I don't find it unusual or suspect about Robert becoming friendly with two locals and inviting them in to play music and drink. I would say, if anything, that it shows how Robert is extremely open and probably too trusting," he says.

Within days, Glen Mahon and Ian Monaghan were charged with aggravated assault and arrested, based on the mounting physical evidence. Glen was unemployed at the time and had a previous conviction for "causing an affray." Ian worked as a barman, and had no previous record.

During a five-day trial that began in October 1999, Mahon and Monaghan admitted to hitting the author, but said "at most, he got three thumps." They plead not guilty, and that they were reacting



Robert Drake attending Moss Rehab in Pennsylvania

to a sexual pass Drake had made.

After prosecutors presented the extensive physical evidence in the case, the two men were found guilty under Ireland's Non-Fatal Offenses Against Persons Act, effectively discarding their claim of self-defense. Both men were sentenced to eight years each in prison, the longest sentence ever issued in Ireland for this offense. Mahon, who had pleaded guilty to stealing Robert's wallet, was sentenced to an additional year to be served concurrent with his eight-year sentence.

Judge Anthony Kennedy commented that while it had not been proven how many blows were struck or whether by fists or an implement, both men were fully liable for all blows struck. He added that the events of January 31, 1999 were "truly shocking."

HEALING

Robert Drake did not fully regain consciousness until almost two months after the attack. Prior to that, his temperature would peak at 107 degrees Fahrenheit; his lungs would partially fill with almost 1.3 liters of fluid; his swollen brain would struggle to absorb its own internal bleeding; and he would suffer from severe pneumonia. Doctors could not promise that he would not remain in a permanent vegetative state.

Slevin and Pretorius, both on leaves of absence from their respective hospitals, began a temporary new life, built around monitoring Robert's condition. The hospital waiting room became their new home. The men washed up in a bathroom set aside for families and rarely left the building, except to get food. The two physicians had formed an unlikely new alliance, united by their mutual love for one man.

"I think Scott and I both sort of isolated ourselves emotionally from each other and focused on the situation at hand," recalls Ciaran. "We quickly began acting like physicians; every time a monitor would go off, we would look to see what was happening and review Robert's medical charts. We probably drove the staff insane."

Scott began to feel that Robert would need to return to the

United States if they were going to help provide him with the best long-term care possible. He talked things over with Ciaran, and then returned to the U.S. to begin making arrangements.

Prior to the decision to bring Robert home to the States, Ciaran had to make some choices of his own about the man he loved. With Robert leaving the country, and Ciaran having a residency to fulfill in Ireland, he had a legitimate excuse to say goodbye to Robert and move on. Robert's prognosis had become more encouraging, but there was doubt that he would ever be the same person physically, and perhaps even emotionally.

But when forced to decide, Ciaran chose Robert.

"Yes, I was very sad when I left Ireland. I knew I would miss my friends and my family terribly," Ciaran recalls, "but I knew I wanted—and needed—to be with Robert more."

Soon, Robert was set up at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania. Since Scott worked there, he was able to closely monitor Robert's progress.

After mounting a massive fund-raising and public relations campaign, Robert's growing network of supporters finally managed to persuade his insurance company to cover intermediate-level rehabilitation at Philadelphia's Moss Rehab Center.

In addition, members of the Arch Street Monthly Meeting, the Quaker group Robert had worshipped with before he moved to Ireland, established the Robert Drake Fund to help with his care.

In the five months since the attack, Robert had not uttered a distinctive word. Hopes for Robert's ability to communicate went soaring, however, during an episode of *The Simpsons*. Scott noticed that Robert was starting to laugh in all the right places, even though the show had no laugh track. It was the first such evidence that Robert was getting better.

Eventually, the author progressed to nodding and producing strained, one-word answers. Talking was an exhaustive struggle, however, involving a fight with his own body to control his mouth and form words. He often became frustrated at the sheer effort to be understood, but at other times, he would beam euphorically after even a modest ounce of progress. For Ciaran, Scott, and Robert's growing number of supporters, there was simply gratitude that they were once again seeing Robert Drake smile.

ROBERT DRAKE TODAY

As I make my way across Philadelphia's Center City to the home of author Robert Drake, I am greeted by a wondrous mix of old and new: a house where Thomas Jefferson lived butting up against Baby GAP.

Robert Drake has moved from a small one-bedroom apartment that he shared with Ciaran Slevin, to a larger three-bedroom uptown. Ciaran now has his own bedroom. He and Robert ended their romantic relationship this past summer; they have begun a new friendship in its place. The third room is for Rickey Dixon, Robert's live-in home health aid.

I'm both eager and nervous to meet Robert in person. There have been many conversations with his representatives to get to this point. My first direct communication with Robert himself came in September via email. He wrote the following:

"I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO IT BUT IN THE FUTURE PLEASE COMMUNICATE WITH MME DIRECTLY. THANK YOU. BTW: THERE'S NO WAY TO MAKE THIS NOT SOUND LIKE I'VE BECOME A PISSY OLD QUEEN STNCE MY INJURY BUT I ASSURE YOU: I'M NOT, NOT NOW,, NOT EVER.

ANON,
RROBE"

"Anon," I would later find out, is an old English word meaning, essentially, "later." This was apparently typical Robert.

Robert's apartment building is an impressive high-rise in Philadelphia's expanding business district. The apartment is made possible in part through special arrangements made on Robert's behalf. I check in with the doorman and make the first of what will be many trips to the sixth floor over the next week.

Rickey opens the door and ushers me in cheerfully. He is a black man, dressed casually, with large, expressive eyes.

I am introduced to Ciaran, and a small group of Robert's close friends and supporters who have gathered to meet me and exchange stories about their friend.

Lastly, I am introduced to Robert, who has been sitting quietly in his wheelchair, pushed up close to the table. As we shake hands for the first time, his hand remains forcefully curled inside mine, a result of his brain's continuing struggle to regain control. He looks up, nods slightly, and says, "Ni-to-mee-you." *[For the sake of this story, I will no longer attempt to write Robert's dialogue phonetically. However, forming words and complete sentences is an ongoing struggle for Robert. It is easy to read his dialogue and assume he's "back to normal," but only in person can you fully hear how his labored speech betrays his obvious intelligence and wit.]*

GUARDING THE QUEEN

Early the next morning, I am clutching my Starbucks coffee like a lifeline and watching Robert attempt to eat breakfast. Today, Rickey has prepared soft fried eggs with bits of bacon, served with toast and coffee. Robert performs the hard work of feeding himself as Rickey remains in the kitchen, humming and cooking his own meal now. This is part of the daily routine.

Robert's hands can barely clutch a fork and knife, getting them down to the plate and back up to his mouth is even harder. He tears into his food, the fork and knife flying back and forth between the plate and his mouth, relying on momentum to help deliver the bulk of it successfully.

"All done?" says Rickey, almost absent-mindedly. Robert nods, saying "Yeah." Rickey gives him a refill of coffee and takes his plate away.

Rickey comes back over and begins remove the many linen napkins that are tucked under Robert's chin and lining his lap. "Oh, he eats just fine," Rickey says, "but try and give Miss Thang here a vit-

"Robert's hands can barely clutch a knife and fork, getting them down to the plate and back up to his mouth is even harder."

amin smoothie and you better brace yourself for a Diva moment." Robert begins to laugh, arching his head up and down and taking in deep gasps of air to fuel the effort.

Rickey pushes Robert's chair into the adapted bathroom. Robert's wheelchair fills up the entire space, so he can only look at himself in the mirror sideways. Rickey gives him a small, hand-held mirror to see his other side and an electric razor. He then leaves Robert alone to shave while he cleans up the breakfast dishes.

Robert runs it around his face over and over again. He is meticulous in the actions that he can still control. Presently, Rickey comes in again and takes the razor. He survey's Robert's face closely and then reaches over and finishes up a few hard to reach areas, like beneath each nostril.

Robert is then given his toothbrush and he begins several long minutes of rigorous brushing, followed by spitting into a cup. Next, Rickey takes a comb, and together they work to tame Robert's thick, dark curls. Finally, Rickey asks Robert what aftershave he is in the mood for. Robert asks for Polo, which is his favorite. "What a surprise!" says Rickey, smiling as he leans over and helps Robert apply it. They both pause afterwards and look at the finished product in the mirror.

Robert is dressed in a stylish ensemble today: vibrant orange t-shirt with a coordinated plaid button-down over that, anchored by black jeans and un-scuffed, white tennis shoes. Rickey helps him

finish off the look by handing Robert his striking Italian-styled green eyeglasses.

Rickey gathers Robert's coat from the bedroom and loads up his backpack with essentials. His backpack and an extra sweater are mounted on the back of his chair; it's a lot like sending a child off to school.

As we leave the apartment and head towards the elevator, Rickey begins joking with Robert, "Oh the stories I could tell," he says. He glances back at me and adds, "I keep threatening Miss Drake here to treat me right, or I'm going to write my own book. It'll be a tell-all called 'Guarding the Queen.'"

REHABILITATION

As we move through the hallways of the Moss Rehabilitation Center, Robert is inundated with dozens of hellos and good mornings by name. When I comment he must be a popular guy, he replies, "I've been coming here a long time."

Later, in a large, open room, Robert is at a table with a piece of paper and a pen with a built-up grip. The therapist asks him to write his name. Minutes go by as he tries to force the pen to cooperate and produce something as formerly mundane as his own signature. The finished product is only vaguely recognizable.

"Good," his therapist says, "let's try something else."

Next, Robert throws himself into a game of hangman with abandon. Studying the paper, lips pursed, he guesses letters and uses his free hand to muss up his hair as he thinks. It takes a majority of the letters being filled in, but Robert takes a guess: Election Day. He is correct.

Robert's additional activities include navigating an electric wheelchair; similar to one he's hoping to get later. When the therapist ask Robert if wants to follow her across the room, he replies with his trademark wit, "No, you're a big girl."

In the afternoon, Robert receives physical therapy. The therapist is a friendly woman, a bit older than Robert; she wears her hair pulled back. She helps Robert onto the mat and starts him off with some moderate stretching exercises, taking Robert's leg, bending it at the knee, and pushing it gently forward. Beads of sweat start appearing on Robert's forehead. He slowly opens his mouth and says, "Ye-ow!"

"I know," the therapist says, "that's not one you get to use very much. Can you hang in there with me?" Robert nods. She begins engaging him in conversation, discussing a play she wants to attend with her husband and asking Robert if he's heard of it. Robert says "Ye-ow" again.

"Sorry," she says, "I'm trying to keep you distracted."

"Try harder!" he says, producing a strained giggle.

A tall mirror is stood up at the end of the room so Robert can see himself. The therapist helps Robert out of his wheelchair, and with some assistance, he is now standing up by leaning on a walker.

I stand beside Robert and realize we are almost eye-to-eye. He is much taller than I expected. For a brief moment I almost forget that Robert has been badly injured. He is standing tall, with dark hair out of place and his sharp eyes peering through those distinctive green frames. There is a rugged handsomeness about him, a life-force. I get a glimpse, perhaps, of his former "whole" self.

As Robert begins trying to slowly force himself forward, I once again witness the painful disconnect between his will, his brain and his body. It is an agonizingly slow process, and it starts one sluggish step at a time.

"You're doing great!" she says, "keep your back straight for me." By this time, others in the room are watching and I find myself catching my breath every time he makes a slight misstep. At the end of the room, in front of the mirror, Robert's therapist looks at him

Ciaran and Robert share a moment in a rented limousine in California last year.



in the glass. "Good job," she says. "Are you ready to take a break?"

Robert nods. I ask him if he ever gets tired of coming here, of all this work. He tells me that he is tired of it all the time, but has no choice. He says he wants his independence, and wants to walk again like he used to. This is key for him. He believes he will make it, too, because "Mamma didn't raise no sissies!"

RELATIONSHIPS

Later in the week, Robert is finishing up a dinner prepared by Rickey. Ciaran is out this evening; he has been dating a 26 year-old engineer named Bill for several months now. I ask Robert about the change in his relationship with Ciaran.

"I was surprised at first, because it happened as I was getting better," says Drake, recalling the fateful conversation with Ciaran. Robert says that if the breakup had happened earlier, it might have made more sense to him, but that regardless, life goes on. "Life goes on" has become his new mantra.

"It's not my way to force things. Never has been, never will be," Robert says, adding that he is glad the two are still friends.

Ciaran later talks with me about the break up with Robert, saying, "I am very lucky to still be close to Robert, considering the changes that have occurred in his life, and, to a lesser degree, in my life. It was a difficult summer. A part of our relationship was ending, and coming to terms with that was very difficult for me and for Robert.

"I'm ecstatic that we are good roommates now. That was a choice I made because I wanted to, and not out of any sense of obligation. It has really been positive for both of us. I value his friendship immensely and feel like I can talk with him about almost anything."

Robert says that he is focused on recovery right now, but that he does hope to be in a relationship again. I ask him to describe what his ideal partner would be like today. He replies, "Smart, honest... live life with passion... not a doctor! And someone who's read all my books!"

THE FUTURE

Rickey opens the door at Robert's apartment Sunday night and ushers me inside. I am leaving the next morning and have all the information I need to write my story, so I've essentially come to say goodbye—and thank you.

"Ms. Crawford is out on the patio," Rickey says, pointing to the open glass doors. "She thought she would take in the night air

before going to bed."

I find Robert outside in the cool air, wrapped up tightly in a sweater. His chair is positioned so that he can look out at the Philadelphia skyline, but still turn his head and call someone if he needs assistance. I take a patio chair beside him and compliment him on the view.

"Thank you," he says. In front of us, tall skyscrapers dripping in lights create a majestic silhouette.

Robert says he is looking forward to getting his life back on track. He has been writing again on his new iMac laptop, a 1999 Christmas gift from his friend, Wendy. Robert enjoys short bursts of productivity on it that will only continue to get better and last longer. He remains undecided on which project he wants to tackle first, but has several in mind. Perhaps he will resume work on *Two-fer*, the novel about the twins.

Robert's New York literary agent, John Talbot, later talked with me about his expectations for Robert's writing future, saying, "I have little doubt that Robert will eventually deliver a high quality example of whatever it is he puts his mind and his heart to. Robert's long-term memory seems fine, and his warmth, insight, and sense of humor are certainly intact. He has the same gentle wisdom, generosity of spirit, and modesty I saw in him from very early on in our friendship."

Mr. Talbot says that there is quite a bit of interest in Robert's memoirs to-date, but that he is looking forward to reading whatever project Robert chooses to develop next.

On the patio, it is getting colder and much later; time to go and let "Ms. Crawford" get her rest. Before I stand up, Ciaran suddenly pokes his head through the patio doors. "We're just going to get something to eat," he says to Robert. "What will you have?" Bill is standing behind him, putting on a jacket.

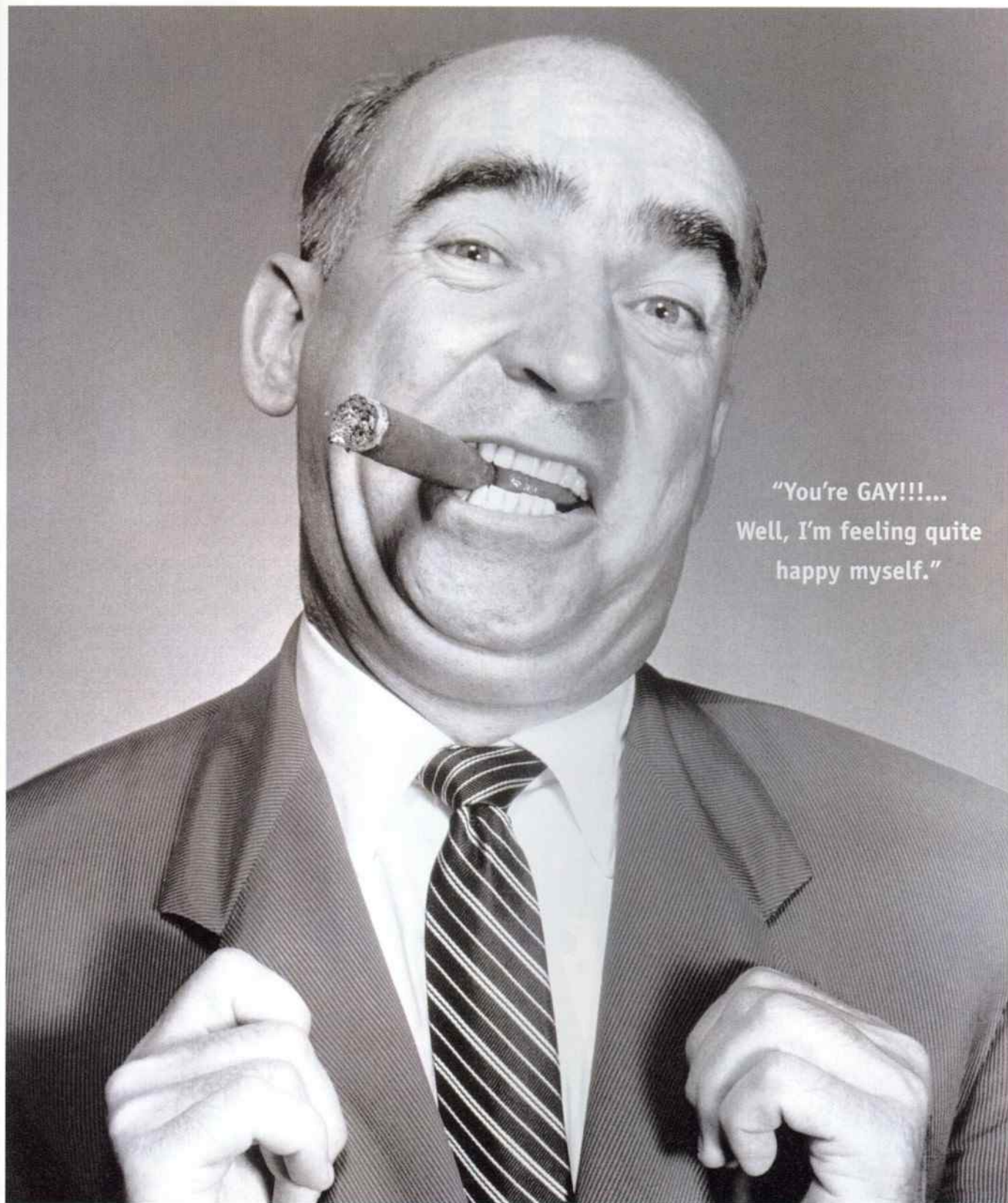
"I have already eaten, thank you," says Robert.

"Okay then, we'll be back shortly." They say goodbye and head for the front door. Through the glass window, I see Rickey mouthing words to a song on the radio as he pours himself a glass of juice. It is just your typical bachelor pad.

"You've got a pretty good thing going on here," I tell Robert.

He uses the side of his hand to adjust his frames. "Yeah," he says, "I try to keep them in line." 

Theresa Judge of The Irish Times and Michael Matza of the Philadelphia Inquirer provided additional research for this story.



"You're GAY!!!!...
Well, I'm feeling quite
happy myself."

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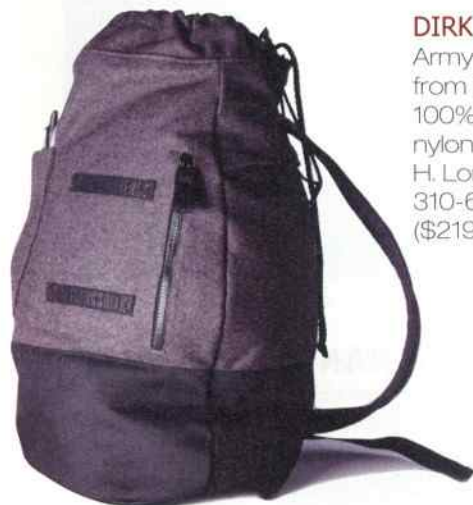


THE TUMI

Ergonomically designed for comfort, the Tumi backpack has a place for everything. It even has a retractable key leash. Available at Neiman Marcus and tumi.com. (\$165)

DIRK BAG

Army-style pull tie dufflebag from Dirk Bikkembergs. 100% wool with techno nylon casing. Available at H. Lorenzo, 310-659-1432. (\$219)



BAG TO BASICS

From the Gap comes this Sling Pack essential. Clean lines and maximum function, lightweight and durable, economically priced at \$25. Available at Gap stores everywhere or gap.com.

Model: IZZO. Sweater (left): From Scaglione, camel, side zip, 100% cashmere. Sweater (right): Issey Miyake pullover 100% wool. From H. Lorenzo



SWISS EASE

Inspired by the original Swiss Army Knife, the "Lausanne" backpack is lightweight, comfortable and efficient. A front organizer panel features zippered storage for PDA, pen and pencil slots plus a Swiss Army knife holder. Elasticized side pockets for water and other storage items. Available at Beverly Hills Luggage and swissarmy.com. (\$139)

URBAN BACKPACK

The "Megalopolis" by Boblebee. A metallic outer shell in a sleek, futuristic backpack that contains a sweatbag, mobile phone pocket, computer pocket and compact disc organizer. The hardshell provides maximum protection for sensitive cargo such as lap tops, cameras and bottles. Available at Saks Fifth Avenue and Boblebee.com. (\$225)



WHEN ONLY PRADA WILL DO

This overnighter or backpack comes in Prada's classic black vera nylon with the perfunctory silver Prada signature. Velcro closures secure the bag at the top. The back features a see through window for drivers license or business card. Available at Barney's or thepurseangel.com. (\$389)



What a concept



Concept Car: Buick Bengal

This jaw-dropping concept roadster was on display this year at the Detroit Auto Show, and not only is it easy on the eyes—it has some very functional innovations as well. These include voice-activated controls for virtually everything and a third door behind the driver door that reveals two more leather-covered seats. If produced, the Bengal would compete with the likes of the upcoming Ford Thunderbird and the stunning new Lexus SC430. Says Buick: "We think this car would catch the attention of younger customers." I think it'll catch the attention of just about anyone.

GPS Navigation Systems, Part I

Most of us have heard of GPS automobile navigation systems, those little car TV screens that show maps, destination guides and lists of local attractions. They're most useful when traveling outside your own zip code, but in case you don't drive much and don't think you'd ever use it, just think back to the last time you stuck a scribbled Post-It on your steering wheel with directions to a party. With these handy (albeit pricey) navigation systems, those days are gone.

The ones that provide the most assistance at a glance are those with the cool LCD screens in the dashboard. They provide real maps that you can zoom in and out of, offer the clearest presentation of information, and are usually spot-on when you arrive at your destination. They can also spoil you with a thorough listing of local restaurants, entertainment venues, gas stations and hospitals. Some even offer voice-reminders to keep you on track in case you're prone to disco driving or other, distracting activities.

The on-screen maps—sometimes regional, most often nationwide—are loaded in a CD-Rom drive somewhere in the vehicle, and tell you where you are via a communication between your car and a system of GPS satellites. Unfortunately, these systems can't detect when streets have time constrictions or are particularly susceptible to congestion, and the maps need to be updated yearly. Still, they can be of great use. I found the GPS system on a Jaguar particularly useful last July 4th on a party-hopping outing in Laguna Beach. The on-board map helped me find some very obscure cliffside soirees. Without it, we'd still be looking.

Acura was the first to offer GPS technology in a car, and its touch-screen system is still the best in my book. BMW's and Jaguar's are good too. Mercedes buries its system in a screen that also houses the radio, cell phone and climate controls. Volvo's screen pops up out of a speaker atop the dash—very Star Trek, but its obscure steering-wheel controls are distracting and unusable by other passengers. Audi offers a navigation system, but it is more of a direction guide display in the center of the gauge cluster, no screen or map. Costs for navigation systems range from \$1280 for the screenless Audi system, around \$2,000 if you want one for your Acura TL, BMW 3-Series or Mercedes C-Class, and higher if you're looking to add one to a new Volvo, Infiniti, Range Rover or Jaguar. That's a chunk of change, but once you get used to having one, you'll use it more often than you think. And you can save your Post-Its for the computer screen.



The GPS Navigation System was originally created by the military. It works by the positioning of satellites overhead.

In the Green

Why are so many Jaguars painted dark green? It all started when Grand Prix racing really took off back in the early 1920's. The cars from different countries all had to be a specific color. French cars were blue, Italian cars were red, German cars were white, and those from Great Britain were—you guessed it—a flat shade of dark verdant called "British Racing Green." You can still order the exact color today.

Cable for the Car?

Do you like road trips as much as we do? Well then have we got news for you! AM/FM/XM radio



bands soon will be accessible via properly equipped car stereos. XM is the satellite-based broadcast band that cable radio companies use to provide commercial-free music to their customers. GM and Ford have been racing to make the coveted technology available on their new cars, and it looks like it will finally happen later this year (between late spring and early fall). Now you can listen to your favorite type of music on the same station all the way from LA to NY, commercial free! Music to our ears!

HERO's Car of the Month



The Choices: Sport Coupes

We sport coupe fans know who we are. Screw practicality, let's have fun! Let someone else help us move. Let someone else load up his SUV at Home Depot. We take the road less traveled, not the carpool lane, and here are our options for 2001:

- Acura Integra
- Mitsubishi Eclipse
- Mercury Cougar
- Toyota Celica
- Volkswagen GTI VR6

HERO pick: the Volkswagen GTI VR6.

Sure it's boxy, sure it's tall, sure, it looks like the hatchback it is. But nothing can match its throaty VR6 engine, quick reflexes, stealthy styling and ingenious interior. And it'll take four in the carpool lane just fine, thank you.

review



Mercedes-Benz C320 vs. BMW 330i

The race between the BMW 3-series and the Mercedes C-Class has been going on for a long time now, and if there's ever been two vehicles that were more tailor-made for the gay community, I don't know what they are. Here are their ingredients: powerful, smooth engines; seats for four, or five in a pinch; stupendous brakes, tight handling, and a relentless barrage of style. Factor in a generous and inevitable helping of snob appeal, and you have the perfect "family" car.

But though they vie for the affections of the same buyer, they are not the same in the way they go about whisking you from work to the gym to the evening fund-raiser. The BMW's sexy shape has been with us for a couple of years, but the sinewy 3.0-liter engine (a bit more powerful than the outgoing 2.8) breathes new life into it. The all-new Mercedes C-Class looks like the Who's-Your-Daddy S-Class, but at about 4/5 scale and less than half the price.

So which is better? Well, that depends on if you have ever embraced the word "drive." Some of us hate the task, and for them, the Benz is the better choice. It has all the cache of a nice car, and all the comfort, solidity and safety of a Mercedes, but doesn't bring the road into the driver's life like the BMW. It is a hot car, mind you, and will get you all the compliments you can stand, but its reflexes are not as razor sharp as the Bimmer's. But for most Merced-o-philes, the panache, status and supreme comfort are enough.

The BMW is the livelier of the pair. Its clean architecture looks delicate and stylized next to the rounder, voluptuous Mercedes, and I'd venture to say that the BMW will stand the test of time better in the annals of the style-mongers. Steering commands are executed virtually as you think them—a BMW hallmark. I prefer the road feel and flatter cornering of the Bimmer, not to mention the 10 extra horsepower of its 3.0-liter engine (225 vs. 215).

Zen & the Art of the Bathroom

"A bathroom should be sterile and beautiful and functional. It should exude Japanese-style purity."

[Isaac Mizrahi, former fashion designer]

The bathroom is probably my favorite room in the house—the place where I'm most in touch with my physical self. It's also the first place I go every morning before facing the day. I look in the mirror and assess my self and the face I'm showing the world. Then there's the shower, the shaving, wolfing down a breakfast shake, catching up on my reading, the occasional relaxing bath, taking my vitamins, fixing my flaws, preparing for a night out, the weekly face mask...

But all these "maintenance" items can pile up, and the more cluttered they are the less in control I feel. Sound familiar?

Transforming your bathroom is about creating a streamlined system that works for you, and getting rid of the junk you're hoarding in there. Here are some ideas to simplify your bathroom experience:

- 1** Dump out those drawers! Wipe them out and only put back the items you use at least once a week. Anything you use less frequently should be stored in a closet or in a basket under the sink. Add a silverware tray or desk drawer dividers for smaller items.
- 2** If you can't store the trashcan under the sink then make sure it's covered—a full trashcan makes the room look junky.
- 3** Keep the windowsill and toilet tank lid cleared off—they are the "danger zones"



that become default storage places for stuff you don't know what to do with.

- 4** Make your bathroom appear larger and more airy by adding a large mirror, hanging a see-through shower curtain, painting the ceiling a lighter color, and hanging a large piece of art rather than several tiny ones.
- 5** Do a reality check on your prescription drugs—when you're done with them, throw

them out! And keep one brand of everything—you don't need three kinds of cold remedies. All those creams and ointments for random rashes and conditions you no longer have should be trashed. If you ever get a flare-up in the future you can always get another tube.

- 6** Streamline your grooming routine—if it takes you more than 15 minutes to shower, dress, and get out the door, you need a new system. Use your daily face soap and weekly scrub in the shower. Install a good shaving mirror in the shower and shave there—the hot water and steam will give you a closer shave and you can keep your razor and shaving cream off the sink. Combine products whenever you can—a combined shampoo and conditioner shaves a couple minutes off your shower. If you use a moisturizer, bronzer, and sunscreen, try finding one product that combines all three (Neutrogena makes a great SPF tinted moisturizer). If you're using multiple products on your hair (gel, shine, spray, etc.), try to find one product that gives you all you need (visit an Aveda or beauty supply store and ask for help). Mouthwash is an extra expense, an extra bottle, and an extra step—can you do without it?

- 7** Get a wash-and-wear haircut. If you can comb your hair with your fingers and one favorite product, then you're out the door in 60 seconds. If you absolutely have to use a blow-dryer, buy a hotel-dryer that installs in the wall for easy access, or install an outlet under the sink so you can leave your dryer plugged in and quickly pull it out and put it away.

THE TAO OF TOWELS

Most of us accrue new towels over years and years, and before you know it we're stuck with a closet-full of worn-down, mismatched towels that look more like dirty laundry. One of the great things about staying at a nice hotel are the stacks of fresh, fluffy, white towels waiting for you after you shower. You can re-create that experience by upgrading your towels. Find some super large, thick, thirsty towels you *love*, and stock up (Check out Restoration Hardware, Banana Republic, or one of the clearance super-stores). Lighter colors or whites usually look the freshest. Don't forget to throw out or give away all your old towels—otherwise you're just adding to the mix.

Streamlining your bathroom routine will save you time and money, and you'll feel in control and inspired every morning. What a way to start the day! ☺

Come celebrate with us Venez faire la fête avec nous

Ven a divertirti, ven a nuestra fiesta Komm und lass uns zusammen feiern

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Pastabilities

Got 20 minutes?

Get over your Lean Cuisine self
and try one of these quick and
delicious pasta dishes.

EASY ARRABIATA





AGLIO E OLIO



SUNDRIED TOMATOES, BASIL,
AND GOAT CHEESE



SAUSAGE, ONION, AND PEPPERS
IN WHITE WINE SAUCE

EASY ARRABIATA

- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 2-3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1/8 teaspoon crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 28-oz. can whole or diced tomatoes
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
- 1 lb. penne pasta
- salt & pepper
- Parmesan cheese (optional)

In a large saucepan, heat olive oil over medium high heat. Add garlic and red pep-



JOE'S TIP OF THE MONTH

When cooking pasta use extra virgin olive oil. It's a great all-purpose oil that tastes lightly olive-y without overpowering other flavors.

per flakes and sauté until garlic just starts to brown, 1-2 minutes. Add tomatoes (with their juice) and heat until bubbling (if using whole tomatoes, crush them with your hands as you add them). Stir in vinegar, then reduce heat and simmer until sauce thickens, 15-20 minutes. Salt and pepper to taste, then toss with prepared pasta and serve hot with grated Parmesan cheese.

Heat olive oil in small frying pan over medium heat. Add tomatoes and garlic and sauté until garlic starts to color, about 2 minutes. Toss with prepared pasta until combined. Add basil and toss. Transfer to warmed serving bowls, then crumble goat cheese over the top.

PREPARING THE PASTA

Use at least 4 quarts of water for one pound of pasta (fill a big pot about half full). Starch leaks from the pasta while boiling, and you need plenty of water to dilute it or the pasta will end up gummy.

Don't add oil to the water. It'll prevent an outer coating of starch from forming, which is necessary to help a sauce stick to the pasta.

Add 1 tablespoon of salt to the water before adding the pasta. It'll make a huge difference in the pasta's taste, seasoning it from the inside.

Read the package directions for how long the pasta should cook. Taste it towards the end of the suggested cooking time, and drain it in a colander just before you think it's done (it'll still cook a little from residual heat).

Don't rinse the pasta in water once it's drained. It'll rinse off the starch and make the pasta watery.

Toss the pasta in 1 tablespoon olive oil to keep it from sticking and drying out if you're not saucing it immediately.

QUICK AGLIO E OLIO (GARLIC, OIL, AND PARMESAN)

- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 4-6 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- medium ground black pepper
- 1 pound spaghetti

Heat olive oil in a small frying pan over medium high heat. Add garlic and sauté until it starts to brown, about 2 minutes. Toss with prepared spaghetti until well coated, then add Parmesan and pepper, to taste. Toss until well-combined and serve immediately.

SUNDRIED TOMATOES, BASIL, AND GOAT CHEESE

- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 4 oz. sundried tomatoes, drained and sliced
- 3-4 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1/4 cup basil, chopped
- 4 oz. goat cheese
- 1 pound farfalle (bow tie) pasta

SAUSAGE, ONION & PEPPERS IN WHITE WINE SAUCE

- 1/2 lb. precooked sausage (chicken or turkey), sliced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 onion, sliced into 1/4-inch thick strips
- 1 bell pepper (red, green, yellow, or mixture), sliced
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 cup white wine
- 1 lb. rigatoni or spaghetti
- Salt & pepper
- Grated Parmesan cheese

For this recipe, use the same large skillet for all heating steps. First, heat sausage over medium high heat, turning once, until lightly browned on both sides. Transfer to small bowl and set aside. Heat olive oil over medium high heat, then add onion, a pinch of salt and pepper, and sauté until onion starts to color and soften, 3-5 minutes. Add bell peppers and sauté 4-5 minutes more, then transfer vegetables to a small bowl and set aside. Heat butter over medium high heat until it just starts to bubble, then add wine. Simmer 5 minutes, then toss with prepared pasta, sausage, onions, and peppers. Season with salt & pepper, then serve warm with grated Parmesan. 

Still Coping After All These Years

For many who survived the early AIDS crisis years, the wounds have yet to heal.



My partner and I were watching the conclusion of the Republican National Convention as George W. and Laura and Dick and Lynn and a truckload of other conservative Republicans came out onto the stage to acknowledge the cheers of the crowd. My partner's voice suddenly came out tight and hard. "I'd like to tie them all together and shoot them up with HIV, and then ignore them, the way they ignored us."

I was startled by the intensity of his outburst, but I knew exactly how he felt.

It's been about seven years since the last of my close friends died of AIDS. Seven years since the worst of the turmoil of constant illness and death finally calmed down. Yet the anger and pain that accompanied those years is still so close to the surface it takes very little for me to feel it all over again.

Sometimes I get annoyed at myself for still feeling so raw about it. Isn't it time I got over it? Enough is enough, move on with your life, stop feeling sorry for yourself. But when I talk about this with other gay men of my generation, I find that I'm not alone. It seems to be something a lot of us carry around with us, privately and usually unspoken. It's the wound that refuses to heal.

One friend told me how angry he got when the morning talk shows commemorated the two-year anniversary of the Oklahoma City bombings with interviews with the surviving loved ones of the victims: Why should they get all that sympathy?

Another friend told me how hard it was to hold his tongue when a co-worker didn't understand why he kept a snapshot of his best friend in his wallet, since his friend had been dead for nine years.

Often it's the obliviousness of some people that seems to trigger the most intense responses. The ones who have no idea that there was ever any cause for pain or anger. The ones who try to minimize it or explain it away. Sometimes I find myself annoyed—probably unfairly—at the well-meaning heterosexual who lowers his or her voice con-

spiratorially and reveals that he or she also had a friend who died of AIDS. I wish I only had one friend who died of AIDS.

A psychotherapist recently told me that she thought gay men who survived The Catastrophe were suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

Year after year, we lived on an emotional roller coaster as we watched so many of our friends and lovers mysteriously get sick, fight for their lives, rebound, get sick again, rebound, get sick again, and die. We saw the telltale signs of the disease on members of our community that we barely knew, and we felt an immediate kinship with them. We read the obituaries daily and tried to read between the lines, in order to get a grasp on the scope of The Catastrophe—or maybe, to feel less alone. And we knew—those of us who had tested negative or who were still well—that it could just as easily be us.

It went on for years, without interruption. We didn't have time to grieve adequately because another death was invariably around the corner. Many of us felt the need to keep our grief to ourselves. At work, we didn't want to arouse suspicions about our own health. Or maybe we didn't want to seem too pitiful. Or maybe we weren't out to our bosses and co-workers. We tried to carry on, as if nothing were happening.

Our families were often no source of comfort. Friends told me about parents who suggested they not get "too involved." Another friend was furious when he told his parents that his best friend had just died and their response was, "You're being safe, aren't you?" Other families just didn't want to hear about it. I know many gay men who broke off all communication with their families, because it just became too painful.

And our "leaders" in Washington—the

conservative Republicans that caused my partner to rail at the television—refused to acknowledge that there was a health crisis. If they did acknowledge it, it was to tell us that we shouldn't expect help from our country because we brought the problem on ourselves with our "behavior."

Directly and indirectly, we were told our lives had no value. And since it echoed what we had so often been told, we internalized it. Maybe, on some level, we believed it.

Therapists recommend a number of steps to begin a healing process for those suffering from Post Traumatic Stress. In general, they involve allowing the feelings to surface, talking about the feelings, and trying to make some sense out of the traumatic events.

Because many of us never had the chance to undertake this process, the feelings remain trapped inside us many years later. Perhaps the most important first step is to accept that we have good reason to feel the way we do.

I also think it's important to accept that for many of us this is a pain we will probably always carry with us. It's part of who we are. To try to will it away is to deny its significance. To berate ourselves for still feeling the pain is to continue the process that started it in the first place.

There have been times when I've seen or heard elderly Jewish Holocaust survivors talk about their experiences in the camps, and it's been clear that the events of 60 years ago still affect who they are. I've never thought of saying: enough is enough, move on with your life, stop feeling sorry for yourself. Instead, I feel for them and I'm moved by their courage. Maybe we should be that kind to ourselves. ☺

Perhaps the most important first step is to accept that we have good reasons to feel the way we do.

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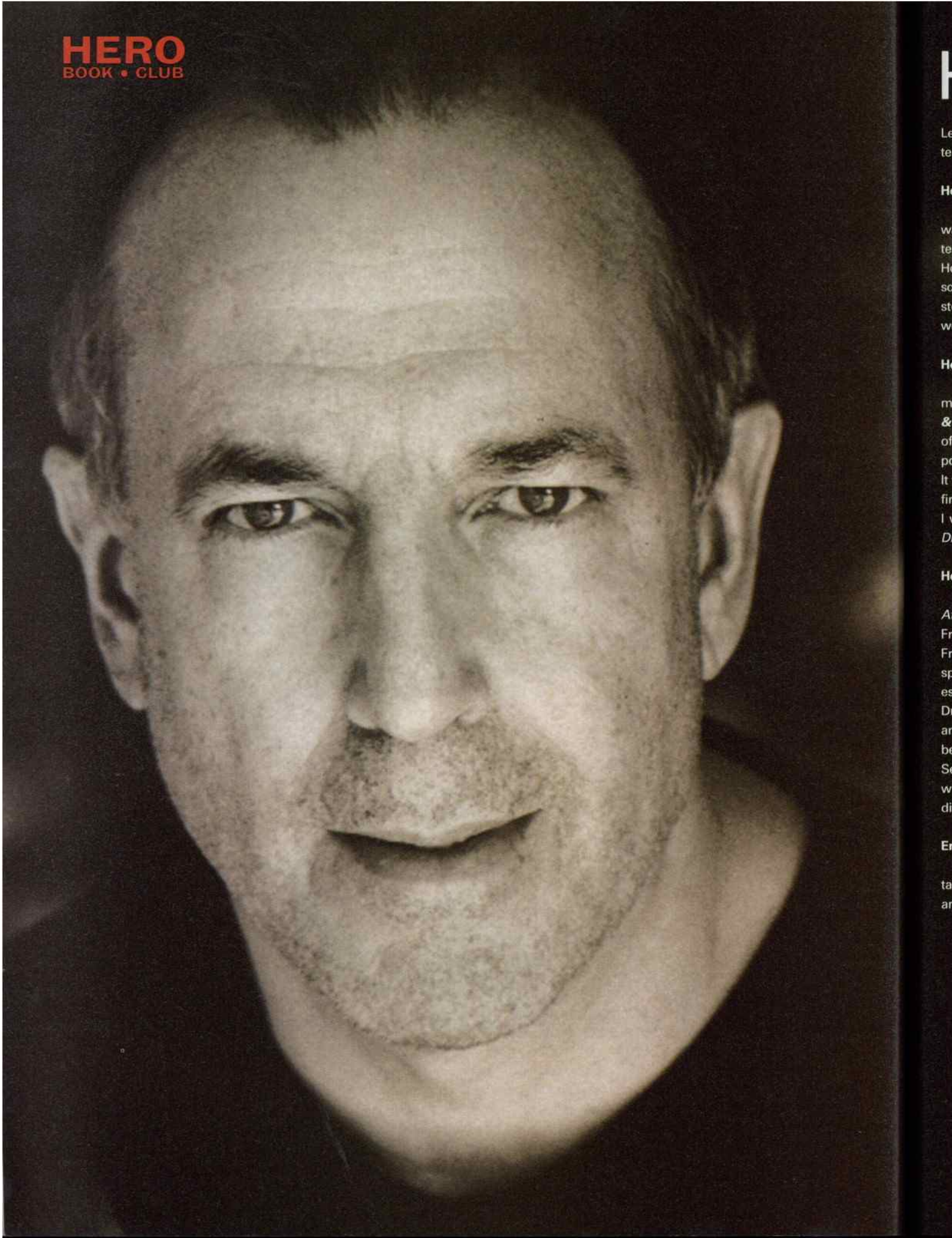
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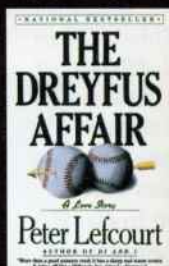
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How did a nice straight guy ended up writing a novel about two major league baseball players making out in a Neiman Marcus mens' dressing room?

In our newest Book Club installment, HERO talked with Peter Lefcourt, an Emmy Award-winning writer and producer of movies and television, and the author of *The Dreyfus Affair*.

How did you get started writing?

In the 60's I was a cab driver in New York, writing stuff that wasn't selling. Finally, in the early 70s, somebody I knew in television told me you could make a lot of money in Hollywood, so I sent in a script I'd written, actually a porno script; I just took the sex out. It was a great gothic murder story, and they bought it. I came out here in 1972, then I worked in TV from the mid-70s to the late 80s.



So a historical French scandal led you to the life of a gay shortstop.

A small percent of people even know what the Dreyfus Affair is, but for fans of history, there are names in the book that parallel the real event. D. J. Pickett - Colonel Picquart was one of the good guys defending Dreyfus in the French army. The big villain, the commissioner of baseball, is Esterhausen, like Walsin Esterhazy, the real guilty guy.

How did you move towards writing a novel?

In the late 80s I decided I had to write a book because my agent told me I was unemployable. This was after I'd won an Emmy for *Cagney & Lacey*; my career plummeted very quickly because I made a couple of impolitic decisions and pissed off some of the people who were in power. So I wrote *The Deal*, a dark comedy about the movie business. It was supposed to be biting the hand that fed me, and it kind of back-fired and I wound up getting screen work again. I wrote that book, then I went back and did a little television, and then I decided to do *The Dreyfus Affair*.

How did a straight guy end up writing a gay romantic comedy?

I didn't set out to write a gay novel. The genesis of *The Dreyfus Affair* is actually sort of cerebral. Historically, the Dreyfus Affair in France always interested me. Alfred Dreyfus, a Jewish officer in the French army in the 1890s, was the victim of a plot, unjustly accused of spying for the Germans. They needed to find a scapegoat for a certain espionage leak; the real guilty party was a guy called Esterhazy. Dreyfus was prosecuted, convicted, and sent to Devil's Island prison, and it caused this enormous rift in French society for several years between people pro- and anti-Dreyfus, fueled by this low-grade anti-Semitism that existed in French upper-class society. I said to myself, what possible issue could divide America the way the Dreyfus Affair divided France?

Enter a gay baseball scandal.

I figured that homophobia was the analog to anti-Semitism. I'm not talking about the heavy stuff, but the low-grade homophobia you find among well-educated people. Then I thought about baseball. Baseball

How did you began fleshing out the story?

One of the joys of writing books is that they take on a momentum of their own. When I started out, the book was going to just be that they got found out and "How do people deal with this?" There's still a certain amount of that, but what happened was the love story kind of interested me.

Were you hesitant to tackle a gay courtship?

I wrote it like any love story. Romance and love are universal and people fall in love the same way. There are a lot of straight women who love this book because it's a love story.

People must have assumed you were gay.

My gay friends told me they knew I wasn't gay because the sex scenes were disappointing. Great love story, they said, but the sex wasn't hot. [laughs] Random House didn't want the book to get ghettoized as a gay book, so in all the publicity the first sentence was like "Peter Lefcourt, who is not gay..." They wanted the book to cross over to a straight audience.

Did anyone take offense?

The book was very well-received, but there was a very slight backlash by some of the more militant members of the gay world, basically "What does a straight man know about this?" *The Advocate* sent a reviewer to review the book and it came back as a diatribe against straight people writing gay novels. They never published it. They sent a second reviewer and he wrote a very nice article saying it doesn't make a difference who writes a book, the final result is a positive, uplifting book that makes you feel good.

Play Ball!

AN INTERVIEW WITH AUTHOR PETER LEFCOURT • BY JOE WHITMORE

My gay friends told me they knew I wasn't gay because the sex scenes were disappointing. Great love story, they said, but the sex wasn't hot.

Now if Randy was gay, wouldn't he have gotten turned on in the showers earlier in life, with naked baseball players around all the time?

Some people say that Randy really isn't gay, but that he's a confused heterosexual. I don't know if that's true or if I'm interested in that. What's interesting to me is what he does within the context of that book. His feelings for DJ are sexual, but also emotional.

You've been trying to get a movie made of *The Dreyfus Affair* for a long time, haven't you?

When the book first came out in 1993 it got good reviews, but Hollywood thought "How are we gonna have two guys kissing on screen?" There were two women, though, producers at Disney who loved the book and managed to get it bought and developed there. They never had a serious intention of making it, I don't think, especially once Disney bought the California Angels, so it got dropped pretty quickly and the book was available again. In 1995, David Frankel had just done *Miami Rhapsody* for Disney. When a young director makes a good movie they ask "What do you want your next movie to be?" and he said, *The Dreyfus Affair*. The people at Disney didn't even realize the book had already been optioned and abandoned there, so they reoptioned it with the idea that David and I would collaborate on the script. That didn't work; David wrote the first draft and that one also sunk like a stone. It went back into limbo.

Who else has been interested?

A strange group of people. Jodie Foster loved it, but her business people told her the movie would never sell in Europe. Barbra Streisand was circling around the book at one point. There was interest from John Cusack, who I thought would be fabulous. Also Garth Brooks, of all people. He said he was interested in the movie and wanted to act in it, but he didn't want to play either of the gay people. He wanted to play a straight guy that tries to help the two other guys out.

That would really change the focus.

I've had people tell me they couldn't make the movie from Randy or DJ's point of view because we wouldn't get actors to play gay, but that we could make the movie from the manager's point of view and get Jack Nicholson.

So what's happened recently?

In 1999 the project moved from Fox to New Line with Betty Thomas attached to direct. New Line financed the last year's

worth of writing, got a script they liked, and said, "We need to have a star because it's expensive." There were all sorts of names,

but the name they responded to was Ben Affleck, a super-hetero, jock kind of guy. Ben read the script and was intrigued, but he wanted some rewrites. He met with Betty and Allen Gould and they did a draft for him and he still wasn't happy. They did another draft, and by March or April he drifted off into *Pearl Harbor*. Finally, New Line had extended the option, but it expired on

September 30 of

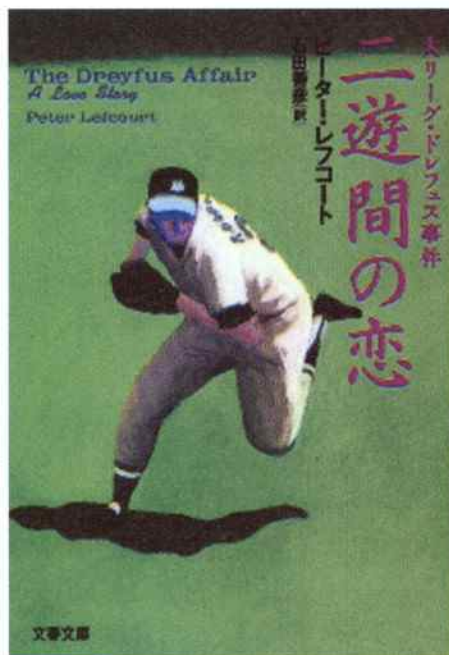
this year, so now the book is out there again. It's sort of a cottage industry I have. I'm making a nice living from options of the book.

That has to be terribly disappointing to get so close so many times.

Though I've been in town long enough to know it's a business of rejection, I still want the movie to get made because it will popularize the book. The book is in its 13th printing—but it's still not that prevalent. I'd love to see the book get more widely read, because the message of the book is something very positive. It doesn't preach, but there's the sense that at the end of the book everyone's learned a little bit about tolerance.

You must be pleased that eight years after publication there's still life in this book.

A lot of people really love the book and read it over and over. Every now and then I'll run into a copy in a bookstore in a strange country. That's what I like about books. At any given moment they're floating around the world somewhere. This book seems to have captured something. **H**



The Japanese edition of *The Dreyfus Affair*

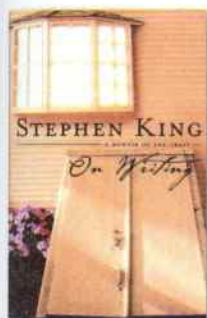
Our Pick for March

Be a part of the HERO Book Club by reading our featured selection. Then join us online at heromag.com for discussions of the book, and read an interview with the author in the next issue of HERO.

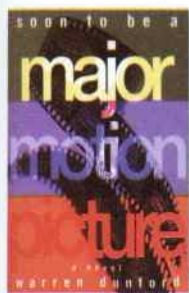


COMFORT & JOY by Jim Grimsley

What's scarier than bringing your boyfriend home to meet your parents? What if your parents didn't know you were gay in the first place? Rich, handsome Ford and his partner Dan are from different worlds, but they've managed to fall in love anyway. In this beautiful, moving novel, they try to bring their worlds together without tearing everything apart.

**On Writing** by Stephen King

Stephen King can scare you half to death, sure, but because he deals in demons he's often been unfairly stigmatized as "too popular to be good," the Danielle Steele of ghost stories. Finally, though, critics are coming around to the fact that he's also a master of writerly things like plot and characterization. His new book, *On Writing*, shows how and why. Part autobiography and part writing manual, it's a non-fiction account of the things that made him who he is: his life and his craft. The fascinating first half of the book details how a poor kid who loved horror movies became a poor adult whose wife rescued Carrie from the trash can; now he's one of the best-selling authors in history. The second half is about writing, adverbs and all, but it's more accessible than any high school textbook; you get first hand knowledge of what went into creating *Misery* and *The Shining*, and a glimpse at what might be going on in his head. By ending with a compelling, vividly told account of the grisly accident that almost killed him two years ago (he was hit by a car), Mr. King ends with writing that perfectly demonstrates the things you've been reading about. It serves to prove he's a man who'll practice what he's preached, with or without vampires.

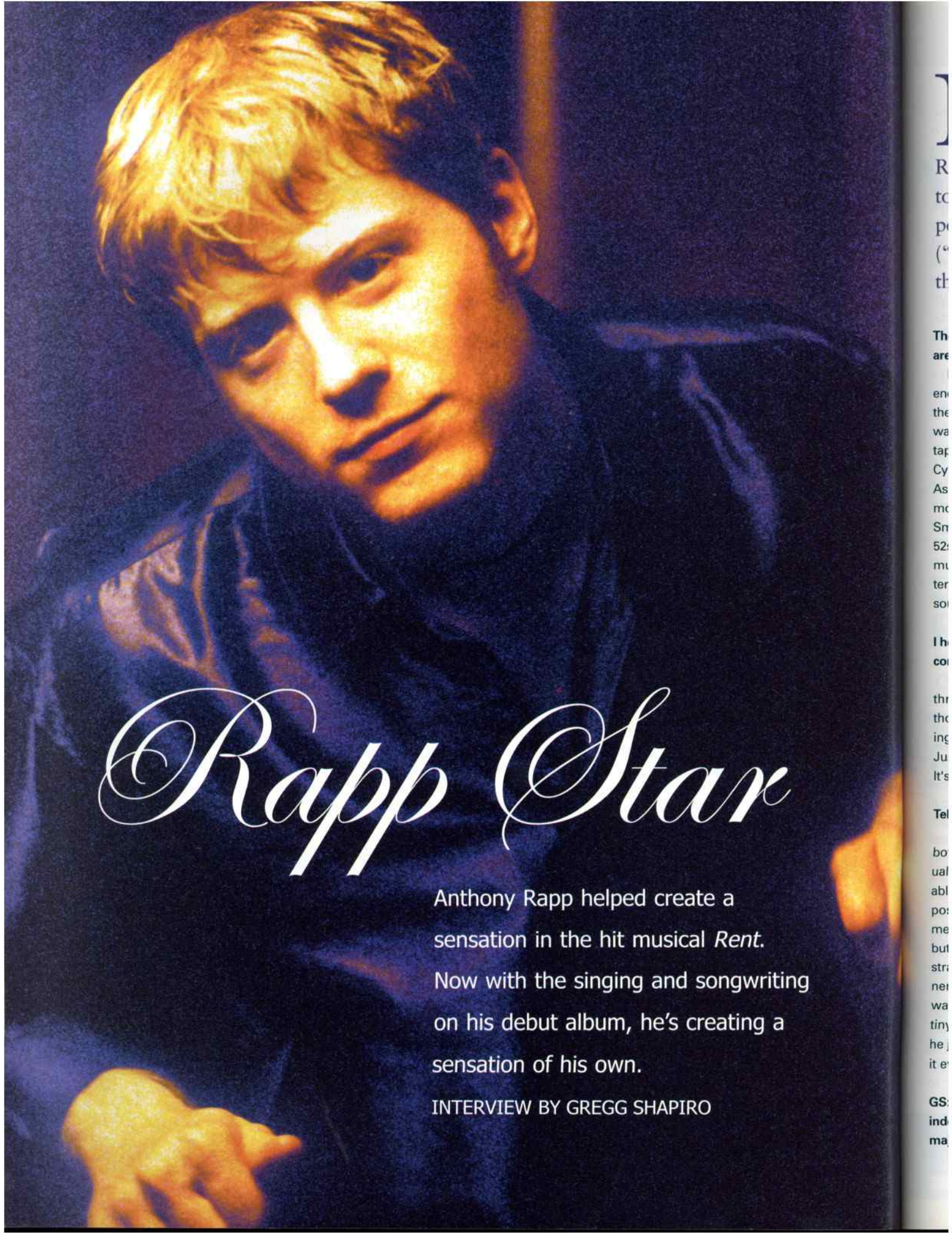
**Soon to be a Major Motion Picture** by Warren Dunford

Mitch is a struggling Toronto screenwriter whose story unfolds in a series of journal entries and screenplay scenes. He's finally hired to write a script, but along with friends Ingrid (an artist) and Ramir (an actor), Mitch is trapped in that horrible space between artistic pursuit and the impossibility of breaking into The Biz. The book is being marketed as a "fun read," and it is (even Anne Bancroft says so). Dunford's best when developing character (Mitch and friends name strangers for the stars they resemble), the leads are genuinely endearing, and the story moves along like good Armistead Maupin. Sometimes things veer dangerously close to cutesy, though, and towards the end, the story quite unexpectedly shifts into Jessica-Fletcher-murder-mystery-mode. It doesn't ruin it, but it becomes more like the formulaic movies Hollywood churns out ad nauseum. Dunford's got talent; he should skip the blockbuster and keep working towards indie credibility.

**The 15 Second Principle: Short Simple Steps to Achieving Long-Term Goals** by Al Secunda

One look at the cover blurbs for this book and you'll know Secunda has a lot of powerful admirers—Deepak Chopra, Jack Canfield, Ray Bradbury, John Forsythe, LeVar Burton, Jacqueline Bisset... Probably because he is skilled at bridging the gap between knowing your dreams and taking action towards them. The book is based on a simple premise: either we don't really care about our dreams, or we are scared to death of them. The first step in this book is to sign an agreement to spend a minimum of 15 seconds a day towards furthering your dream projects. Sounds simple, right? Secunda explains that the first 15 seconds are the most difficult, because you have to cross over your reasons for not taking action and actually do something. The experience helps you discover whether those dreams you've been talking about for years are either too cold (not enough interest on your part) or too hot (too much interest or fear of failure or success). That alone is a powerful first step towards self-awareness. Of course, you can and hopefully will spend more than 15 seconds each day, but if you only do 15 seconds then you're at least living up to your end of the agreement. The rest of the book addresses living the life you want to be living, finding out how to achieve your goals, learning what motivates you and what you're afraid of, and discovering how to be your peak self in sports, performing, public speaking, etc. It's a quick and easy read filled with interesting stories and anecdotes, and might be just the thing you need if your New Year's resolutions are falling by the wayside. Can you spare 15 seconds? (the15secondprinciple.com). 

Into Guys?**Into Sports?****You're Not Alone.****OUTSPORTS.COM**



Rapp Star

Anthony Rapp helped create a sensation in the hit musical *Rent*. Now with the singing and songwriting on his debut album, he's creating a sensation of his own.

INTERVIEW BY GREGG SHAPIRO

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Not since Dreamgirl Jennifer Holliday released her mid-80s debut record has an artist so closely associated with the Broadway stage created an album as significant as *Look Around* by Anthony Rapp. Rapp's debut disc features a dozen dynamic songs, seven co-written by Rapp, with Rapp receiving sole writing credit for two others. This album is pop perfection from start to finish, with Rapp dabbling in punchy new wave ("Human Tornado," "Goodbye"), infectious power pop ("Living Alive," "Out Out Damn Spot"), pleasant retro (the title track), electro-pop ("Now I Know") and even a touch of shoe-gazing ("Always"). The album's centerpiece, however, is the same-gender love song "Just Some Guy" which deserves to be played loud and proud.

The music on your album is so diverse. What are your musical influences?

I discovered that no matter who your influences are, you can never really write songs like them. I grew up listening to 80s pop and new wave. Among my first tapes, back in the day of tapes, was the *Footloose* soundtrack and Cyndi Lauper and Prince and Tears for Fears. As I sort of matured and investigated even more out-there stuff, I discovered U2, The Smiths, Kate Bush, Peter Dinklage, B-52s and on and on. They're all pop musicians, but they're a little off center. Suzanne Vega. *The Pretty in Pink* soundtrack was one of the big ones.

I heard that you cover a Hole song in concert...

"Miss World." I was looking through the CD collection, and I always thought it would be fun to do a gender bending thing, but without making it a big deal. Just do the song. And it went over really well. It's become a staple now.

Tell me about "Just Some Guy."

It was very important to me to write a boy-boy love song and make that explicit. Not sexually, but that it's not just subtext. It was probably the only song on the record where I composed the lyrics fully before writing the melody. There was a little melody in my head, but then I brought it to my friend Joe, who's straight but real open-minded. I was a little nervous about sharing it with him. But he was completely cool about it. I had that little tiny melody for the verse lines, and from that he just started plucking out some chords and it evolved into the song.

GS: *Look Around* has been released on the independent Paigow label. Was there any major-label interest in this project?

We didn't even try. Adam (Pascal) had had experiences with major labels, Daphne (Rubin-Vega) had experiences. My friend and partner Carolyn, with whom we're creating this label, her son is in a band that was signed to Sire and they never put out the record. I know so many people who've had such nightmarish experiences with major labels. So after horror story after horror story, and knowing that it was going to be a potentially painful

I'm becoming more and more comfortable singing my own songs, it's very fulfilling, but it's real scary still.

Love songs are hard.

process of knocking on doors, we just decided to go ahead and do it (ourselves). Our idea was if we can do it on our own and get it to as many ears as possible, and if a major label wants to become involved, great. But it's a hard road. Right now, I'm a little dismayed by what's selling, for the first time in a long time. I watched the MTV awards because I'm putting out this record and I wanted to see what's out there. I don't understand it. I feel old. I just think, "Would Cyndi Lauper have happened today?"

You've toured as a member of a musical theater production and now as a pop artist. How are they different?

Musical theater is like a big production. I just go where I'm told. This is all self-generated. That alone is a huge difference. There's a really big difference in singing other people's songs and singing my own songs. Sometimes it's easier to sing other people's songs; it's not quite so vulnerable. But I'm becoming more and more comfortable singing my own

songs. It's very fulfilling, but it's real scary still.

You also have an active career in film, with recent appearance in *Road Trip*. What do you like best about doing movies?

The best film experience I had was *Dazed and Confused*. When a movie set is really great, and *Road Trip* had some of this, all these people come together from all over the place into this concentrated atmosphere for weeks or months, and that's all you do for the time you do it. It's like being in any kind of collaborative experience. It's very fun and exciting. That's the best part of making a movie; the day-to-day, everybody there for the same purpose.

What do you like least about doing movies?

The time spent waiting, and the powerlessness you have, at the mercy of test audiences or whatever it is that makes them decide to cut some things.

You've done theatre, film, pop music...How do you see yourself?

I don't even know anymore. To say artist is so...I'm an artist, I guess, but I don't know (laughs). I think that what's most important to me, what I hope people connect to, if they connect to my work at all, is that I approach my work with authenticity.

Just promise me you have a book of poems in you, a la Jewel.

I don't have poems (laughs). This music project came as a sort of back door surprise in the sense that it's something I've always harbored as a little dream, and I just happened to meet some people who opened the door for me, quite literally. **H**



LAURA NYRO
Time and Love:
The Essential
Masters

Nyro's work as both a solo artist and as the composer of megahits for a multitude of

artists during the late sixties and early seventies is an essential part of the American songbook. The fact that she was a lesbian only adds to her mystique. *Time and Love* compiles sixteen of her most beloved tracks and is a worthy introduction to this legendary singer/songwriter (who died suddenly in 1997 of ovarian cancer). From her pop-gospel inflected numbers ("Stoney End," "Save The Country," "Time And Love") to her timeless pop masterpieces ("Wedding Bell Blues," "Stoned Soul Picnic," "Sexy Mama") to her classic cover of Carole King's "Up On The Roof," Laura Nyro's voice still rings true. I was disappointed by the exclusion of more tracks from her *Smile* album, and later albums (such as *Nested*, *Mother's Spiritual* and *Walk the Dog and Light the Light*) were shut out of this collection. However, this album is still a pleasure, and a reminder of our loss. For a more comprehensive career retrospective, check out 1997's two-disc *Stoned Soul Picnic* collection, which includes eighteen additional tracks (including a couple never before released live tracks).

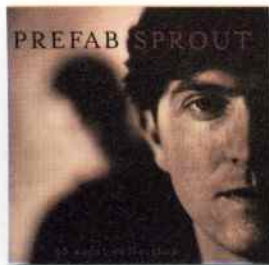


SHIRLEY BASSEY
The Remix
Album

This sassy remix disc, featuring the unmistakable vocals of the

classy Miss Shirley Bassey, feels like the product of seeds planted years ago. If David McAlmont's cover of "Diamonds Are Forever," on David Arnold's 1997 *Shaken and Stirred: James Bond Project* disc wasn't the sole inspiration for the Bassey album, then it surely must have played some part. Mantronik's multifaceted re-working of "Diamonds Are Forever" returns the semi-precious song

to Miss Bassey's realm, and qualifies it as a gem. Her vocals on the career reviving 1998 smash hit "History Repeating" by The Propellerheads probably led to their latest pairing on the sensational remix of "Goldfinger." Leave it to Groove Armada not to lose the sixties Euro-pop quality of "Never Never Never" while still firmly grounding it in the twenty-first century. Wild Oscar's brassy remix of Bassey's "Big Spender" is an unexpected delight and had me imagining what choreographer Bob Fosse could have done with it. Pseudo psychedelia rules on DJ Spinn's remix of "Spinning Wheel," which inspire blood, sweat and tears in abundance, while Twelftree's remix of "Light My Fire" takes top honors over Kenny Dope's remix.



PREFAB SPROUT
38 Karat
Collection

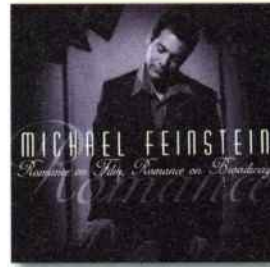
Brit-pop invasions come in waves, and the quartet known as

Prefab Sprout (fronted by lead vocalist and songwriter Paddy McAloon) made a moderate-sized splash on our shores beginning in the mid-eighties. As proof, this two-disc collection bubbles over with songs that will take you back in time in a melodic, refreshing way. It was with the band's second disc *Two Wheels Good* that Prefab Sprout made their first and best impression. Infectious pop tunes such as "Faron Young" and "Appetite" were essential to every college radio station's playlists in those days. Other familiar "hits" over the years included "Cars & Girls," "The King Of Rock 'n' Roll," and "Carnival 2000." This expansive compilation (38 tracks) is a terrific summation of this under-appreciated band's career. It will also whet your appetite for the album that Prefab Sprout is about to record.

MICHAEL FEINSTEIN

Romance on Film, Romance on Broadway

I was thrilled when I heard Michael Feinstein sing "Old Friend" (from *I'm Getting My Act Together And Taking It On The Road*) when he performed at the Equality Rocks concert in Washington, DC.



It was, the first time I'd ever heard him sing something from that era of popular music. I had the same positive

response when I heard his cover of "Girl Talk" on his 1999 album *Big City Rhythms*. The material on this double disc set goes way back in time, and features his renditions of songs associated with movies (disc one) and the Broadway stage (disc two). Most of the songs are from movies and plays of the 1920s through the 1950s, and you will find such instantly recognizable standards as "As Time Goes By," "They Say It's Wonderful," and "I've Never Been In Love Before." "How Do You Keep The Music Playing?," the newest entry in this collection of romantic film songs, was co-written by Michel LeGrand and the Bergmans, and is a standout. One thing that I did find strange about this album is that it was recorded live (applause between songs), but there is no mention of that fact.



BBMAK
BBMaK

The British pop trio B B M a k (Christian Burns, Mark Barry and Ste McNally) are set apart from

the other pretty boys ruling MTV's charts because they actually write their own songs and play their own instruments. On their self-titled debut disc, these three handsome young men with groovy accents sing songs that indicate that they've experienced an awful lot of heartache ("Ghost Of You and Me," "Next Time," "I Can Tell") for guys their age. With so many of their songs falling into the best-sympathy-sex-pick-up-lines-in-the-world category, these guys ought to consider the stability of a same-sex relationship. Their smash hit single "Back Here" is the most hopeful track on the disc and as catchy as a winter cold. **C**

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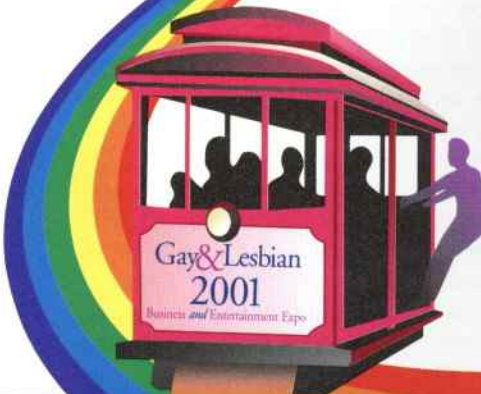
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GOODY-GOODY

Hannibal the novel came out in a storm of publicity, and the quest to make the film (the sequel to Oscar-winner *The Silence of the Lambs*) caused a minor frenzy. Critics chided the book for its gross-outs, Jodie Foster refused to reprise her role as Clarice Starling, and Jonathan Demme announced he wouldn't be directing. Many assumed the film was doomed. Now it looks like they were wrong. *Hannibal* is incredible, due to another chill-inducing performance from Anthony Hopkins. Black eyes and blank stare in tow, Hopkins' Hannibal is one of the most indelible characters ever on film. As for Ms. Foster's Oscar-winning shoes? The versatile Julianne Moore fills them perfectly, making this Clarice her own courageous creation. With Ridley Scott at the helm the final result is beautiful to look at and terrifying to watch.

Seven years have passed since Hannibal Lector helped Clarice capture serial killer Buffalo Bill; now he's living amid the splendor of Europe and enjoying his freedom. Mason Verger (Gary Oldman, as Hannibal's sixth victim pre-Lambs) wants to see Lector's freedom interrupted. Thanks to Hannibal, he has no lips or eyelids, but he's got one hell of a revenge fantasy. To catch the doctor he decides to use bait: Miss Clarice herself. (Opens February 9)

SUMMER LOVIN'

Nico and Dani (aka "Krampack") is a moving and honest exploration of sexual awakening set in a seaside resort outside Barcelona. Nico (Fernando Ramallo) and Dani (Jordi Vilches) are 17-year-old best friends who have shared everything since childhood. When Nico's parents leave him alone in their vacation home, he invites Dani to stay with him. Together they fish, play on the beach, party with girls, and relieve any pent-up sexual energy with a little mutual "Krampack" (handjob). As their sexual identities diverge, Nico can't explain his growing feelings toward Dani. Nico's awakening attraction is shown with an honesty and innocence that make it endearing and almost voyeuristic (I wonder if there are any young American actors who are this comfortable with their sexuality?). A sweeter film about love and friendship would be hard to find, and it ends exactly where it should—full of possibility. (Opens Feb 2 in LA, NY, and SF)



The Ten Most Romantic Movies Ever!



An Affair to Remember – This Cary Grant/Deborah Kerr weeper was made in 1957, but it still calls for a box of Kleenex. Where have all the Cary Grants gone?



Annie Hall – Diane Keaton shines in the quintessential Woody Allen film (Best Picture 1977). One of the best comedies ever made, the film takes a surprisingly touching and bittersweet turn.



Beautiful Thing – This sweet movie (based on Jonathan Harvey's play) hits the perfect blend of dramedy in its depiction of two teenage Englishmen falling in love for the first time, set to the music of the great Mama Cass.



The Bridges of Madison County – The divine Miss Meryl won yet another Oscar nomination for her portrayal of a middle-aged farmwife awakened to love by Clint Eastwood. The hand-on-the-car-door-handle scene (you'll know what we mean) is unforgettable.



The English Patient – The gorgeous Ralph Fiennes and Kristin Scott Thomas heat up the desert while Juliette Binoche tends to the mysterious patient himself.



Maurice – In this Merchant Ivory period romance, James Wilby struggles with upper crust society and his homosexuality. One of Hugh Grant's first films, it's made even more watchable by cutie Rupert Graves.



Say Anything – Cameron Crowe (*Jerry Maguire*) gets it just right. Lili Taylor is priceless singing "Joe Lies," but Peter Gabriel's "In Your Eyes" steals the movie, blaring from a boombox over John Cusack's head.



The Way We Were – She's Katie, he's Hubbell; she's an outspoken activist, he's a WASPy novelist; she's Streisand, he's Redford. Sydney Pollack directs.



When Harry Met Sally – It's an incredibly witty take on modern love, with near-perfect performances from Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan.



Shakespeare in Love – The ultimate feel-good romance, this film is smart and well-acted, and you'd be hard put to find a performance as winsomely romantic as Gwyneth Paltrow's.

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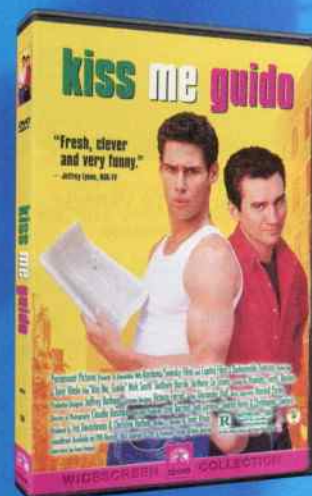
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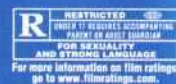
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Philadelphia

SOTTO VARALLI • MONK'S BELGIAN CAFE • JIM'S STEAK • MORE THAN JUST ICE CREAM • SHAMPOO • BY CHRISTOPHER WYNN

Located in the heart of Philadelphia's Avenue of the Arts



The bar at Sotto Varalli

on Broad Street, **SOTTO VARALLI** (231 Broad St., 215-546-6800, varalliusa.com/sotto.html), \$25-\$55) is sophisticated seafood at its best. Start with a drink at the giant squid bar (yes, you read that correctly) and then ask for the table next to

EAT

the trickling waterfall. Fresh is the name of the game for dinner: try some shucked oysters before moving on to pan-roasted lobster with lemon, capers and shallots. If you prefer simple, enjoy the basic grilled Atlantic salmon. The wine and dessert menus are equally sublime. Parking is minimal, so walk here instead and enjoy the sights.

MONK'S BELGIAN CAFÉ (264 S. 16th St. at Spruce, 215-545-7005, monkscafe.com, \$10-\$15) boasts a selection of some of the finest and rarest beers in the United States. Located off of trendy Spruce Street, locals keep this place hopping at all hours. The Belgian interior, overflowing with warm wood accents, is a cozy place to catch up with friends. After agonizing over which beer to sample first, try some delicious chicken and artichoke crepes. You also can't go wrong with the hefty burgers. But whatever you do, order a heaping basket of fresh cut fries, slathered in cheese. Again, parking is minimal; try walking or take a cab.

You can't spend time in Philadelphia without enjoying the Philly cheese steak. **JIM'S STEAKS** is credited with starting the whole

phenomenon (400 South St., 215-928-1911, jimssteaks.com, \$5-\$10). Skip the pretensions here and order the original: deep-fried, topped with onions and drowning in Jim's famous cheez-whiz. The staff is a bit abrupt, often referred to by locals as the "Cheese Steak Nazis," but don't let them scare you away from this native food experience.

As the name implies, **MORE THAN JUST ICE CREAM** transcends dairy to become a bona fide brunch and lunch hotspot (1119 Locust St., near 12th St., 215-574-0586, \$3-\$10). Yuppies, medical students and buffed-bodies from the infamous 12th Street gym all compete for tables on the weekends at this surprisingly hip eatery. There are scrumptious desserts, 32 flavors of ice cream, elaborate scrambled egg concoctions, and a popular turkey burger with cranberry chutney and carrot hummus. In other words, something for everyone. Street parking is limited, but available.

Tucked inside the heart of Philadelphia's Washington Square West neighborhood, **THE ALEXANDER INN** is a luxury boutique bed and breakfast in the center of it all (Spruce at 12th St., 1-877-ALEX-INN, \$99-\$159 a night). Owner Mel Heifetz spent almost



The Alexander Inn

two-years painstakingly restoring this historic property. The result is old-time charm and craftsmanship combined with modern conven-

SLEEP

iences. Each of the 48 designer rooms boasts digital TV and computer/modem hookups. There is also a fitness room onsite, and

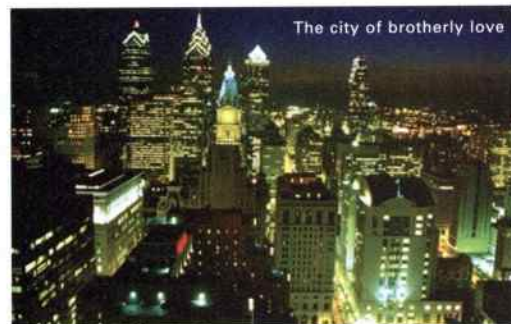
guests are treated to a complimentary breakfast buffet each morning with gourmet coffee. The Alexander's greatest amenity, however, is its friendly staff. Personnel are upbeat, knowledgeable and helpful, creating a warm, family-like atmosphere. High-style, supreme service and below-market rates give The Alexander a "delicious secret" status. Promise you'll only tell your closest friends.

Repeatedly voted one of Philly's best dance clubs, **SHAMPOO's** secret is two-fold: diversity and square-footage (417 N. Eighth St., 215-922-7500, \$10 at the door). Everyone can find a space here. Tuesdays are "Boy Bar," with dance and house music; Wednesdays are "Nocturne," for the goth and industrial crowd; "Smile" Thursdays are

PLAY

hip-hop; Fridays are called "Shaft," (use your imagination) with progressive and deep house music. "Peaceful Saturday" is a mixture of all of the above. Multiple, spacious rooms allow for many moods. When summer comes try the "Groove Garden" out back for mingling under the stars. Lot parking.

Launched in 1973, **GIOVANNI'S ROOM** (1145 Pine St., 215-923-2960, giovannisroom.com) is among the oldest and very best gay and lesbian bookstores operating today. This quaint shop is a booklover's dream. Intimate rooms and wrap-around staircases meander through the 18th century property. Most of the biggest names in gay literature have read here, including Edmund White and Andrew Holleran. Stop by and introduce yourself to Giovanni's charismatic owner, Ed Hermance; he'll be happy to give



The city of brotherly love

you a tour.

For something to do night or day in Philly, take a stroll down eclectic **SOUTH STREET** (From Front St. to 10th St.). Here you'll find a colorful collection of shops, restaurants, bars, tattoo parlors and everything in between. At sunset, stroll all the way down South Street to the pier for a romantic view.

Norman Rockwell has nothing



South Street

on the time-stands-still beauty of the town of **CHESTNUT HILL** (From downtown Philly on the SEPTA train, take the R8 Chestnut Hill West, leaves every 30 minutes, \$2.50). Only 25 minutes from Philly by train, this historic location was once the scene of a Revolutionary War battle in 1777. Today, hundreds of quaint shops and breathtaking architecture still line its main drag called Germantown Avenue. Bring a camera.

METRO Dallas

VOLTAIRE • ANGRY DOG • INWOOD LOUNGE • COURTYARD ON THE TRAIL • HAVANA BOYS • FARMERS MARKET • BY CHRISTOPHER WYNN

Voted one of Dallas' 10 Best Restaurants in 1999, **VOLTAIRE** (5150 Keller Springs Rd., 972-239-8988, \$45 and up) takes its name from the French philosopher and its decadence from eccentric owner Scott Ginsburg. This \$12 million Taj Mahal-style building, which took over 2 years to build, is worth the visit alone.

Fortunately, once the gawking is over, Voltaire's French cuisine also does not disappoint. The menu is "price-fixed" at \$45 and includes four courses, with a choice of over 50 items. I recommend starting out with the lobster harissa hors d'oeuvres, followed by some succulent beef tenderloin with foie gras, but there are no wrong choices here. Reservations are



advised, valet and lot parking available.

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Deep Ellum's **ANGRY DOG** (2726 Commerce, 214-741-4406, angrydog.com, \$5-\$10). This casual neighborhood bar and eatery is a local favorite, winning

a reader's choice award in one local paper for "Best Hamburger." Other fried and fabulous options include the Angry "Hot" Dog and Duke's Chicken Fried Steak. Add their famous chili to any order for 75 cents; it's well worth it. Street and lot parking available.

If you love a good martini, or at least love the way you look drinking a good martini, then the **INWOOD LOUNGE** is for you, baby (5458 W. Lovers Lane at Inwood Rd., 214-350-7834, \$4-\$8). Located adjacent to the historic Inwood Theater, this intimate bar oozes arthouse sophistication, suddenly causing even the most chaste patrons to crave a cigar or long-stem filtered cigarette. In addition to martinis, the cosmopolitans are primo here. Take a table next to the "water wall" for added drama. The perfect place to drink your dinner. Lot parking available.

Hidden among the trees of Dallas' White Rock Lake, the modern **COURTYARD ON THE TRAIL** **BED AND BREAKFAST** (8045 Forest Trail at White Rock Lake, courtyardonthe-trail.com, 1-800-484-6260, pin #0465, \$110-\$155) is the perfect mix of country retreat and city convenience. All the basic amenities are here, from stylish rooms and oversized garden tubs to a business and conference center for those who can't leave work behind. Nature lovers



will enjoy a walk or bike ride around the lake, or may simply lounge in the courtyard beside the pool. The sprawling house and rooms are stylish and well appointed. Ask for friendly owner,



The Havana Boys whoop it up at Sipango

Alan Kagan. Reservations and deposit required; sorry, no pets.

Spurred on by the success of **PLAY** Ricky Martin's hips, bumping and grinding Latin-style has become a new in-scene in Dallas.

Each Wednesday night, the fashionable come out in droves to **SIPANGO** bar and restaurant for a night of cha-cha and salsa with the **HAVANA BOYS** (Sipango, 4513 Travis St., 214-522-2411, sipango.com, Wednesday nights). Wear comfortable shoes. Valet parking available.

Okay, yes you

can buy fresh Texas fruits and vegetables here, but the **DALLAS FARMERS MARKET** (1010 S. Pearl at Marilla St., 214-670-5880, free, open year round) has become so much more. For starters, there are more free samples than ever, which keeps half of the local artist community alive. Even better, the place has grown to resemble something of a flea market. Come shop on weekends for hand-made furniture and Mexican pottery. Warning: vendors only accept cash.

For something **TOTALLY** different, take your chances during open mic night at **BETWIXT AND BETWEEN** (813 Exposition at Parry, 214-821-3340, betwixt.org, Sunday nights). This alternative coffee-community house celebrates spiritual exploration

and personal expression, with a heavy Wiccan slant. "Bohemian Dreams" open mike on Sundays can range from music to poetry to improv. Don't look for a sign with the name (there's not one), just a large door with a red crescent moon above it. Walk in like you own the place.

ENTERTAINMENT PICKS

THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA

(Dallas Theater Center, 3636 Turtle Creek Blvd., 214-526-8210, Jan.-Feb.) Come see Tennessee Williams' startling play about a priest who leads a group of church ladies to a decrepit hotel in Mexico. The playhouse itself is also notable as a design of famed architect, Frank Lloyd Wright

TAKE OUT Marty's Wine Bar & Café

CAFÉ TUGOGH is the upscale takeout and delivery arm of Marty's Wine Bar, a full service restaurant. Thanks to recent price lowering, this is THE solution for upscale gourmet takeout that won't break the bank. The choices here are endless and include everything from stuffed roasted chicken to Asian noodle salad. Also try the cedar-planked salmon at least once. (3316 Oak Lawn Ave., 214-526-7796, martydfrw.com, \$10-\$20)



New York

METRO

SNACK • SUSHI SAMBA • CHANTERELLE • THE LIBRARY HOTEL • NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN • REBA MCENTIRE • BY CHRISTOPHER MEASOM

SNACK



and if a team not wearing matching uniforms

The menu at Snack

ed in touristy SoHo, it's a bit outside the well-worn shopping beat and so mostly frequented by locals who come in for the chickpea and fennel soup or vegetarian mousaka. No liquor license means brightly colored Greek soft drinks or, better yet, BYOB.

Partridge-Family windows, a central sushi bar with five non-stop chefs, a back- and under-lit bar and soy sauce dishes decorated with a devilish satyr doing a split in the air showing off his, um, manhood.

EAT

They create a groovy backdrop at **SUSHI SAMBA** (87 Seventh Avenue South; 212-691-7885; \$20), where a busy beehive of 20-something dot-com folk and 30-something Wall Streeters gather. And while the Japanese-Hispano fare offers some entertainment—tiny, live river crabs are chosen from the bowl at the sushi bar by the chef (if he can catch

Fluffy, tangy taramosalata with diced purple onion sprinkled on top is served at **SNACK** (105 Thompson Street; 212-925-1040; avg. entrée \$7.95) as world music plays quietly in this easy-going neighborhood mix of diner and old-fashioned grocery; five tables of two are squeezed on one wall, shelves of olives, ouzo and olive oil on the other. Although located

downstairs, which seem to be in the middle of a bamboo forest.

Twenty-one-year-old **CHANTERELLE** (2 Harrison Street; 212-966-6960; prix fixe only, \$79) still enchants. The seamless service led by owner Karen Waltuck—including that ever-so-helpful sommelier—is the perfect compliment to husband-and-chef David's skill in the kitchen. Firmly based in French classical cuisine (a salad of foie gras and portobello mushrooms), he doesn't hesitate to incorporate any technique or flavor (soft-shell crabs in honey, soy and green peppercorns) to create the tasty, ever-changing menu. The single open room of lofty ceilings, towering bouquets and elegant diners make this a great Valentine's Day pick.



The reading room at the Library Hotel

THE LIBRARY HOTEL (299 Madison Avenue; 877-793-READ or 212-983-4500; libraryhotel.com; \$265-\$375) is more than just an egghead's delight. Themed around the Dewey Decimal System (third floor: social sciences, sixth floor: technology, seventh floor: the arts), this 60-room midtown hotel decorated in mahogany paneling and library books also offers old-world hospitality by a well-read and attentive staff. Although a bit complex to those who aren't intimate with Melvil Dewey's revolutionary (yet systematic) decimal classification system, guests choose their room based on personal interest. For example, the "Love Room" is 1100.006. Simply take Dewey's 100 (the general category philosophy with sub-category love), then

SLEEP

use a little poetic license and add another 1 because it's on the 11th floor, then add .006, meaning it's room number 6 on the 11th floor, and . . . anyway, once there, you'll find *The Complete Kama Sutra* on the bedside table, a CD of soothing sounds (a brook, the forest, wind, etc.) playing and photos of loving couples (one a male couple) above the inviting bed in this simple, classic, Zen-like room. If books aren't what you crave after a hard day of work or shopping, a video library of the American Film Institute's top 100 films of all time is also available.

February—a time to stay out of the cold—is also the perfect time to explore some of the smaller, lesser-known museums in town. The juxtaposition of Native American art (in its many and varied forms) and the building in which it is housed helps inform the visitor that the **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN** (One Bowling Green; 212-514-3823; free) indeed wants to create and maintain a "dialogue . . . between the Native peoples of the Western Hemisphere and the non-native world." Yes, the old beaux-arts Customs House with its marble and swirling staircases and murals of American prosperity

about to bloom is spectacular. But at the same time the exhibits enlighten visitors to past and present Native American life, the building also brings attention to an important crossroads in history where the old world met the new. Through November surround yourself with the sounds and feel of the Great Plains and see the stunning and spiritual Plains Indian shirts on display.

In 1988 Anita Jacobson, curator of **THE LOWER EAST SIDE TENEMENT MUSEUM** (90 Orchard Street; 212-431-0233; \$9), practically stumbled across the building at 97 Orchard Street that eventually became the museum. Furniture, crates of ginger ale and other items were left untouched "as though people had just picked up and left," Jacobson recalls of the building that had been abandoned in 1935. Standing in dimly-lit and

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peeling three-room apartments, the docent reveals the fascinating stories of German, Irish, Italian, Eastern European and Chinese immigrants who lived in the house.

THE MUSEUM OF CHINESE IN THE AMERICAS (70 Mulberry Street; 212-619-4785; \$3) is the first full-time, professionally-staffed museum dedicated to Chinese history and culture. Like all other cultures, that includes—but often turns a blind eye to—gay men. Currently, however, this tiny 2-room gallery on the second floor of a 100-year-old building in the heart of Chinatown is showing Ken Chu's *Tong Zhi/Comrade: Out in Asia America*, an installation that addresses Chu's interest in identity, masculinity, homosexuality and AIDS in Asian communities. He brings the discourse of sexual orientation into this museum and out into the local community.



ENTERTAINMENT PICKS

Jan. 26: Reba McEntire takes the lead in *Annie Get Your Gun*. (The Marquis Theatre, 212-307-4100)

Feb. 3, 10, 17: gay hockey team *Rockets* plays (Sky Rink, Chelsea Piers, 212-336-6100)

Feb. 7-11: The New York Armory Antiques Show (7th Regiment Armory, 212-472-1180)



Chic at Chantarelle

them) who fries 'em up and . . . CRUNCH!—the scene itself is clearly the star. Check out the bathrooms

When nasty February cold drives you indoors, do what everybody else is doing: order in comfort food. There is none better than a deep dish pizza from **GIORDANO'S** (13 city locations, giordanos.com, average entrée \$9, pizza \$15, delivery \$2). Start off with the fried calamari and follow with the classic deep dish (just the right amount of garlic sauce



on top!). The slices are so thick one will probably fill you up, leaving plenty of leftovers for late-night snacking. Discuss with your lover the relative merits of tiramisu versus cheesecake—order both. Let the wind howl as you chow down on cheap Italian served Chicago style.

Haven't seen your best friend in months? Take him to **VILLA KULA TEA ROOM** (4518 North Lincoln, 773-728-3114) for a cozy treat with a hippie vibe. Neither of you will be disappointed with a menu offering a la carte tea service or full entrée

EAT

meals. On a recent visit, I tried the scones with clotted cream, a raspberry crumble bar, and pot of Earl

actually retro, but the name seems less ironic when you taste the fresh contemporary fare. Chef-partner Kelly Courtney's priority is bringing the freshest organic meat and produce to the table, which means a frequently changing but always enticing menu. The Texas Truck Stop Beef Ribeye Chop is served with torpedo onions and exotic mushrooms, with a fondue of English Stilton cheese. The Baked Alaska is a delicate, golden concoction of meringue and banana-caramel ice cream.

Ignore the egg chairs, inflatable lamps, and excessive use of orange and enjoy the artfully displayed food with the rest of the young, hip Wicker Parkers.

With all the construction and development going on downtown, you'd think finding an affordable hotel would be a chore. Not so at the **CASS HOTEL** (640 North Wabash, 800-781-4030, casshotel.com). This vintage inn has two very attractive draws: price and location. Situated in the heart of River North, the 150-room establishment is steps away from shopping on Michigan Avenue and countless tourist attractions. And with room rates ranging from \$64 single occupancy to a \$99 double, the price is right for college students or artistic types on a budget. This is no frills enterprise. You'll get HBO, voice mail, and a clean, comfortable room. But with so much to do right around the corner and the money you've saved burning a hole in your pocket, the Cass is an excellent homebase from which to assail the city.

Las Vegas comes to the Midwest at the **HOUSE OF BLUES HOTEL** (333 North Dearborn, 312-245-0333; \$219-\$525 for queen size suite). Nestled in the entertainment filled Marina City (imagine the Jetsons zooming in and out of the retro-futurist towers), this 367-room complex boasts three restaurants, Crunch Fitness Club, a 36-lane bowling center, and, of course, the famous House of Blues itself. Creatively zany décor, a wealth of activity, and two bars with entertainment—you might be inclined to overindulge. Repent the next morning at the Sunday Gospel Brunch, a



The lobby at the House of Blues Hotel

buffet style repast with a live gospel choir. Testify!

This month's Play features invite you to "Rediscover the Classics". Start off by passing between the lion sentries guarding the entrance to the **ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO** (111 South Michigan Avenue, 312-443-3600, artic.edu). Treasures such as Grant Wood's *American Gothic*, Edward Hopper's *Nighthawks*, and Seurat's enormous *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte-1884* are what bring in the tourists, while locals enjoy special exhibits like the current *Once Upon a Picture: Caldecott Medal and Honor Books* (through Feb. 25). Admission is \$8, cheap by museum standards, and Tuesday is free day. Spend the whole day canvassing

SLEEP

the collections of this truly world class institution.

A classic in its own right is the **MUSIC BOX THEATRE** (3733 North Southport, 773-871-6604, musicboxtheatre.com). Built in 1929 and restored in 1982, the 800-seat deluxe theater takes you back to an era when moviegoing was

an experience, not a trial-by-mall. The dark blue, cove-lit ceiling has moving cloud formations resembling a night sky. Plaster ornamentation and faux terracotta were designed to make viewers feel as if they were in an open-air Palazzo. The theatre shows first-run arthouse flicks and midnight movies, but your



A gem like David Lean's *Summertime* will seduce you all over again when seen on the big screen.

You've been before, and you'll go again: **SIDETRACK SHOWTUNES MONDAY** is a classic in the Chicago gay community because every visit reveals something new. Sidetrack (3349 North Halsted, 773-477-9189) is a video-cruise bar the rest of the

week, but every Monday night from 8pm to 2am it becomes a family room where grown men sing along to "I Could Have Danced All Night" and scores of other Broadway and film showstoppers. Many of

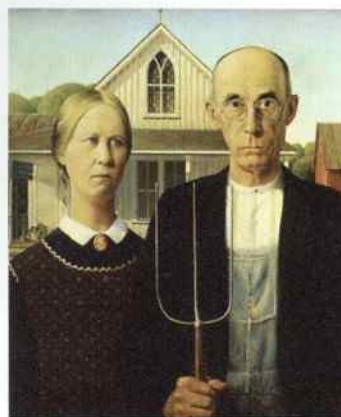
the clips have a participatory section, such as throwing napkins in the air at the end of "Don't Cry for Me Argentina" or chanting "Fall, fall, fall" to a hapless dancer during the Chorus Line finale. Get one of Sidetrack's famous Absolut slushy drinks and sing out, Louise!



Get cozy at the Villa Kula Tea Room

Grey while my companion had the equally delicious spinach and cheese quiche, red potatoes, and a pot of jasmine. Average cost was around \$25, including an after-dinner wine. Slip into the dark-paneled back parlor if you want to avoid the live jazz pianist tinkling in the front room three nights a week.

Both the décor and the menu listings at **MOD** (1520 North Damen, 773-252-1500, entrees \$14-26) are



Grant Wood's classic at the Art Institute

METRO San Francisco

BOULEVARD • ERIC'S RESTAURANT • CAPP'S CORNER • MONTICELLO INN • SOUND OF MUSIC • BOMBAY BAZAAR • BY BLAKE TUCKER

BOULEVARD is a great special event restaurant. Nancy Oakes, the chef-owner, has turned her place into one of the most consistently voted top restaurants in SF, accord-



A taste of Paris at Boulevard

ing to the Zagat guide, and there's no question as to why: her creations are delicious, homey, yummy and expensive. The interior is suave and sophisticated, built by Pat Kuleto to

EAT

look like a refined, upscale Parisian restaurant of the 1920's. It makes you feel special just to be inside. And the service makes sure that everything they do makes you comfortable and well-attended. Heather Ho's desserts are top-of-the-line and John Lancaster's 350+ wine list is grand. Nothing misses its mark, so order anything and you'll be happy. (Lunch and dinner, \$24-\$38 entrees, boulevardrestaurant.com, 1 Mission Street, 415-543-6084)

ERIC'S RESTAURANT in Noe Valley serves Hunan and Mandarin cuisine cheap (lunch and dinner seven days a week) and it's the best I've had in the city. Hoisin String Beans are the top of their class and appetizer "Eric's Cakes" can't be beat. Prices for entrees run from \$6.25 to \$9.95 at dinner, under \$5 at lunch. Go early to avoid the crowds or order take-out! (1500 Church St, citysearch.com/sfo/erics, 415-282-0919)

CAPP'S CORNER is an old neighborhood restaurant in North beach—

and it feels like it. The walls are decorated with celebrities that have visited, famous baseball players from the area, and local politicians, past and present. It has a full bar and a low-key, informal feel for such an old stand-by. It's one of the last of a dying breed with the encroachment of new restaurants in SF when it comes to prices, too. Get a full dinner, including salad, bread, minestrone and dessert for only \$13-\$15. (Lunch weekdays, dinner every day, 1600 Powell Street, 415-989-2589)

THE MONTICELLO INN is stately and pleasant—just as Thomas Jefferson would've wanted it. Styled after his Virginia home, the Monticello is small and decorated with Federal Period décor, from writing desks to stately furniture, bringing it a wonderful sense of quiet

SLEEP

colonial charm. And beginning in January, there will be a book bar in every room! That's right, cozy up to your honey in bed, grab a book from the shelf and dive in. If you stay in a deluxe suite, hit the Borders button on your phone, speak with the store directly (just down the street), and get something delivered directly to



your room. 25% of your purchase will be donated to the SF Public Library, so it goes for a good cause. Ask for National Book Month Rates in February, from \$119-\$179. (127 Ellis Street. 415-392-8800 or 800-669-7777).

You weren't in Europe when the **SING-A-LONG SOUND OF MUSIC** was a hit? You're in luck! Now it finally arrives in San Francisco! The Castro Theater, in the heart of SF's gay district, will host this rousing, get-up-and-dance musical starting

on Feb. 16 and running until March 1—and everyone is encouraged to sing, make noise, dress up as their favorite character and have fun! Don't live in SF? Climb every mountain and get here, because

you won't have this much fun anywhere else! The hills are alive with this 1965 Best Picture winner. Christopher Plummer and Julie Andrews aren't going on 17, so you should catch this while you can! (Castro Theater, Castro & Market St. 415-621-6120)

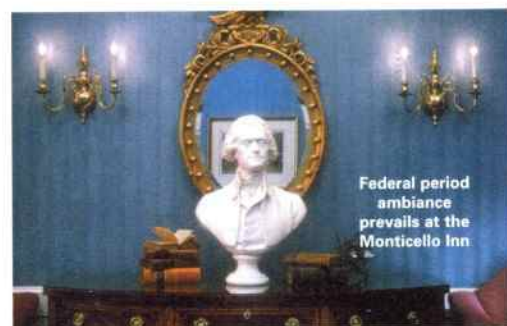
THE 34TH ANTIQUARIAN BOOK FAIR is Feb. 23-25. One of only four book fairs in the US in 2001 sanctioned by the

Antiquarian Booksellers Association of America, this is a very big deal. More than 250 international vendors will be attending, with some of the rarest books, manuscripts, maps, illustrations and other texts from all over the world. Patricia

PLAY

Hall, the creator of Raggedy Ann, and Frank M. Robinson will speak at two separate Saturday afternoon lectures. Get a weekend pass for just \$10 on Friday (3-9 p.m.), or spend \$5 on Saturday or Sunday (11-7 p.m., 11-5 p.m.) and get unlimited admission through the end of the fair (includes lectures). (Concourse Exhibition Center, 635 8th Street, 415-551-5190)

When was the last time you shopped at a great Indian grocery store? Head to **BOMBAY BAZAAR** in the Mission. Here you'll find the best cheap selections of great Indian spices for cooking, from



Federal period
ambiance
prevails at the
Monticello Inn

asaftetida to star anise, as well as great deals on ghee (clarified butter), dal (lentils), chutney (Indian jam) and aachar, a delicious hot fruity condiment. Not only are there long aisles for cooking

ingredients, but they sell some clothing and cooking utensils.

Connected next door is the chaat house, where you can get tandoori, samosas, lassi (yogurt shakes), and great ice cream and Indian desserts. Ice cream flavors include date, cardamom chai, and cinnamon. Prices are rock bottom (the most expensive item is \$5), so you won't need to bring your credit card. (552 Valencia Street, 415-431-1103).



ENTERTAINMENT PICKS

Feb. 1, 3: Itzhak Perlman at SF Symphony (Davies Symphony Hall, 415-864-6000)

Feb. 2-4: SF Arts of Pacific Asia Show (Fort Mason, 310-455-2886)

Feb. 10-18: Sex Tour (San Francisco Zoo, 415-705-0761)

Feb. 22-26: Pacific Orchid Exposition (Fort Mason Center, 415-546-9608)

Feb. 24-Mar. 4: TulipMania (Pier 39, 415-705-5500)

METRO

Los Angeles

Café Stella • Vienna • Felt • Elan • Southern Baptist Sissies • Morganne • Raena • BY PAUL HORNE

Tucked behind a storefront in Silverlake, **CAFÉ STELLA** (3932 Sunset Blvd., 323-666-0265) is a French culinary treasure where you'd least expect to find one.

Perfect for Valentine's Day, this intimate bistro serves up delicious food in a cozy Paris-street-scene-meets-New-York-chic atmosphere, candlelight flickering in the outdoor courtyard while intimate groupings sip wine and wait for their food. Every French restaurant claims theirs is the best, but Café Stella wins for French

EAT onion soup, warm salty cheese melted over flavorful broth and onions. The mushroom sauce covering the sirloin is buttery, rich, and too good to be true, and the crème brûlée and pot du chocolat are perfectly creamy and sweet.

For the hands-down best breakfast on Melrose, try **VIENNA** (7356 Melrose, 323-651-3822), a homey local hangout that's packed on weekend mornings, and for good reason. Try the eggs scrambled with salmon, brie, and chives, the baked eggs with parmesan, or the insanely great Euro-benedict (eggs benedict on a croissant!). Vienna also serves soups, salads, pastas, and sandwiches, along with great coffee drinks, chai lattes, and fruit smoothies. Celebs, Hell's Angels, and Melrose homeowners make it an unpretentious place for people watching. Bring your dog and eat on the sidewalk patio (7:30am - 7:00 pm daily, plus they deliver).

FELT offers the best of both worlds: good food and a unique environment in which one can be seen and heard. Designed by Ralph Gentile and Sophie Harvey, Felt comes as close to cosmopolitan chic as LA can get. The night I was there Andy Bell (Erasure) was holding court and Kathy Nijimy was



Get in the mood at the bar at Felt

nested among friends. The thoroughly modern American cuisine is really comfort food—a roasted Butternut squash soup, barbecue glazed pork chops and swirled crème brûlée will not leave you wanting. As for the name, you guessed it: the walls and menu are covered in felt (8279 Santa Monica Blvd. 323-822-3888).

Continuing the retro chic trend of boutique hotels in LA is the newly opened **ELAN** (8435 Beverly). For \$185 a night you get a very comfortable king size bed (or 2 doubles) with Royal deluxe bedding and down comforters in a simple but

SLEEP spacious room. Also included are a 25-inch TV with built-in VCR and in-room high-speed internet access. A junior suite is also available for an additional \$50 (great for busi-



The Elan Hotel

ness meetings or a separate room for kids). The lobby is simple but chic, and will eventually be a great place to meet for drinks when the Elan gets its liquor license. The cardio fitness room is a bit sparse (this is LA, people!), but if you're into shopping you could not possibly sleep closer to the Beverly Center or Beverly Connection—they're both a

2-minute walk away. There's no hotel restaurant yet, but Jan's Diner across the street is handling room service and lobby dining. A great hotel for business travelers who want to work and still have time to eat and shop at night. (323-658-6663, elanhotel.com)

SOUTHERN BAPTIST SISSIES is the best gay play I've seen—it's riotously funny while still poignant and moving, thanks to Dell Shores' expert dialogue and direction and stellar performances from the talented cast. This must-see theatrical event is the story of four gay men raised in the Baptist Church in Dallas, Texas. Standout performances include Leslie Jordan as the aging, alcoholic "Peanut" whose impeccable comic timing is worth the price of admission, and Tate Taylor as "T.J." the closeted choirboy whose anti-gay preaching is frighteningly

PLAY believable. Each boy comes to terms with his sexual awakening in his own way, and while Shores peppers the show with titillating nudity and drag performances, his story-

telling talent and the play's devastating truths will have you talking about this show long after you leave the theatre. Extended through Feb. 25 (Zephyr Theatre, 7456 Melrose Avenue, Thurs/Fri/Sat 8pm, Sun. 7pm, \$22.00 and \$25.00).

Every other Friday upstairs at Farfalla in a small but

quaint bar, cabaret goes global with the glamorous appearance of **MORGANNE**. Singing songs that range from Edith Piaf to Grace Jones, this Canadian born singer/make-up artist/model wows an enthusiastic audience with wit, audacity and charm. Her audience-involving "C'est Bon" is a joyous occasion that guarantees to bring out the French in



The illustrious Morganne performing

everyone. Morganne claims she was inspired by drag queens, which might account for the numerous costume changes and the fabulous make-up, but the singing is inspired and original. See her before she becomes famous! (morganne.com, Farfalla, 323-938-2504)

As Melrose continues to mall-ify itself with chains like Starbucks and



The eclectic interior of Raena

Urban Outfitters, Third Street has become the hip and eclectic shopping hotbed that Melrose used to be. For rare and beautiful artifacts for your home, check out **RAENA**. You'll find cool fountains, collectible ceramics, frames, and fantastic photographic lanterns, but the giant floor candles are this store's claim to fame. Enormous pillar candles imported from Mexico are 42 inches high and refillable—a showstopper for your home at \$250. (raena.com).

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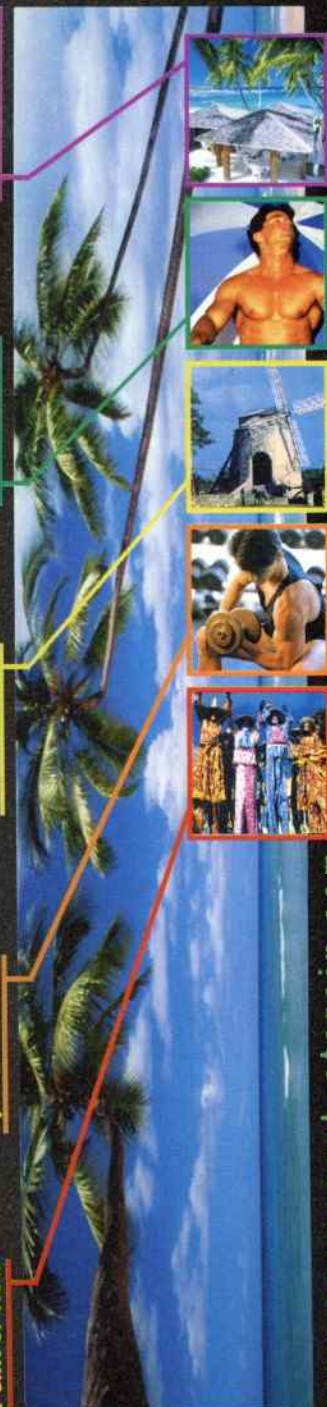
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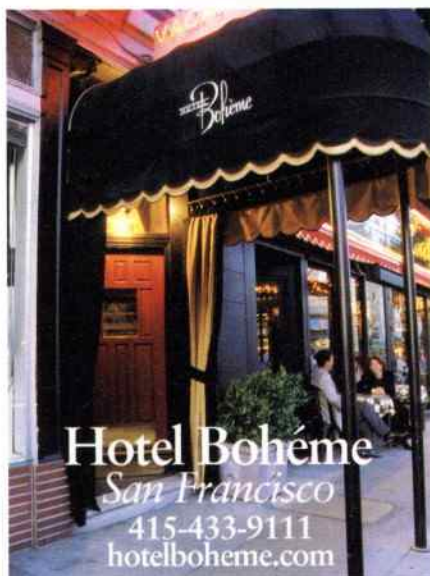
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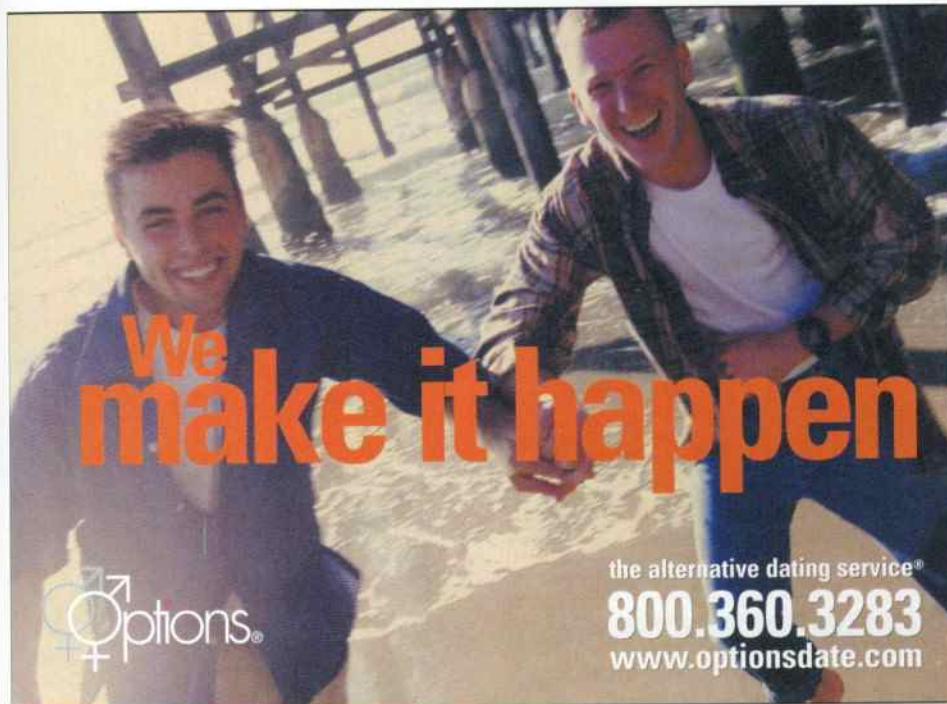
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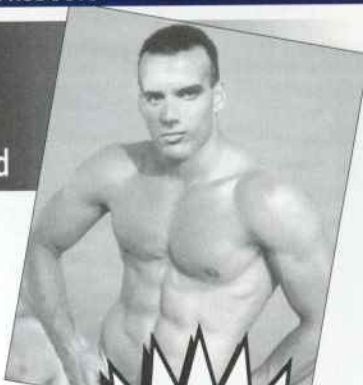
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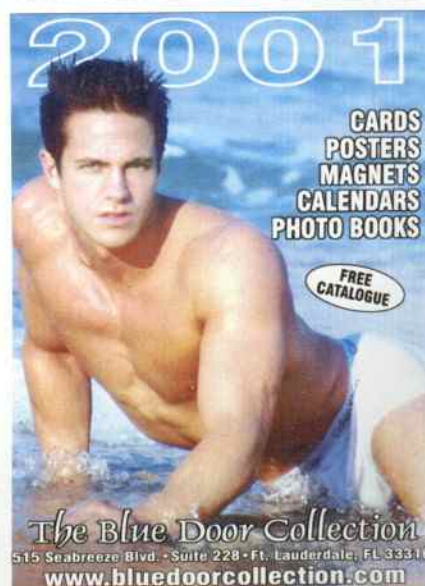
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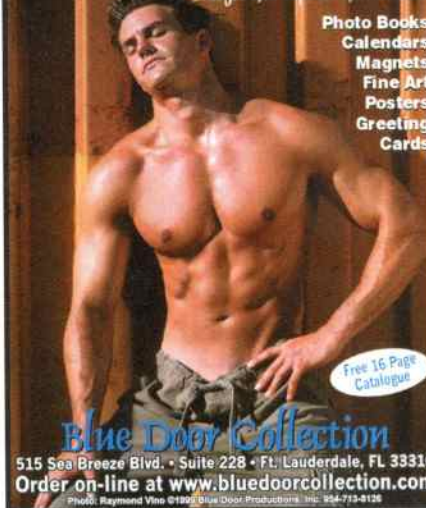


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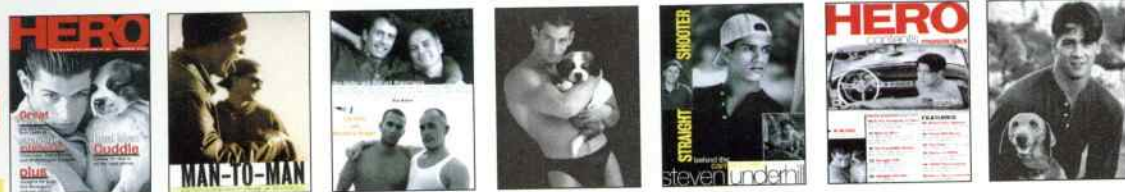
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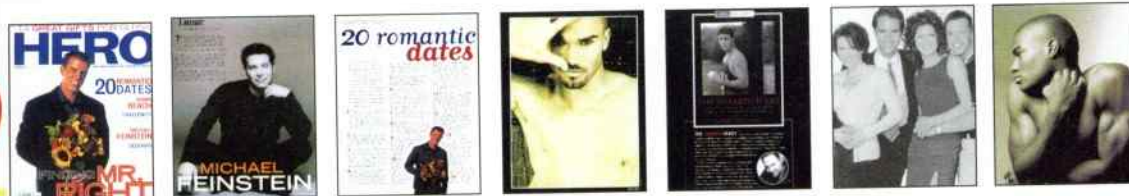
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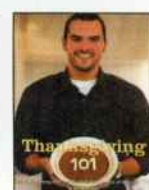
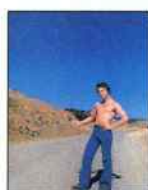
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A11

February 14th



10 Valentine Gifts That'll Knock His Socks Off

"Return to Tiffany" key ring – You can't beat that little blue box. (\$60, Tiffany.com)

Cambridge Stripe tie – The guys at the office might not know who gave it to him, but he will. (\$85, RalphLauren.com)

Hadrian Homme by Annick Goutal – Get him to smell the way you want him to. (3.3 oz., \$95, Neiman Marcus)

Burberry check shirt – Tried, true, and back in style. (\$110, Burberry.com)

BR knit boxers – He can take a piece of you with him wherever he goes. (\$14, BananaRepublic)

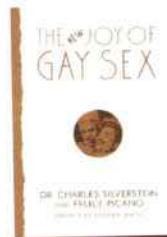
50 Lap Ironman watch from Timex – The easiest way to join him on his run. (\$45, Timex.com)

Black & Decker VersaPak cordless screwdriver – If he's the kind of guy who watches HGTV, he could use it. (\$30, Amazon.com)



V-DAY REMINDER

Valentine's Day is a great excuse to send cards and gifts to people other than your significant other--don't forget mom, sisters, and friends. Or become a secret admirer (read: stalker) and send something anonymously...



BACK TO BASICS Bored in the bedroom? Get a fresh outlook with the original *The New Joy of Gay Sex* by Dr. Charles Silverstein and Felice Picano. It ain't so new anymore (published in 1993) and the pictures are oh-so-dated (70's anyone?), but good technique doesn't ever go out of style. We guarantee you'll find something to do you haven't done, or at least a new way to do it. (\$22)

Flower Power

Saint Valentine was executed for helping Christians, but prior to his execution he sent a note to his beloved, signing it "from your Valentine." Thus occurred the inspiration for the day that celebrates love with gifts, cards, and flowers. Today it's big business, but the sentiment remains. Surprise your significant other with a bouquet of flowers delivered to his office, or tantalize that secret crush with a bundle of wildflowers sent without a note. It's easier than ever to send flowers; the internet is blooming with websites that cater to arrangements and deliveries. One of our favorites is flowerbud.com. Tastefully and beautifully packaged, they specialize in the kind of delivery one can only hope to get more than once a year. Other online florists include:

FTD.com
1-800-Flowers
Freshroses.com
Hallmark.com
Redenvelope.com
Freshflowersource.com
PCFlowers.com
Calyxandcorolla.com
Marthasflowers.com



The way to a man's heart...

For a 4-star meal you can eat in your pajamas, try ImpromptuGourmet.com. Seven of the country's greatest chefs have created vacuum-sealed meal kits for their specialty dishes, ready to be shipped so you can prepare them at home (in less than 30 minutes!). They provide everything but pots, pans, and olive oil. Try Charlie Palmer's breast of duck with pomegranate molasses glaze (\$37.95). He'll figure out dessert...

SINGLE & LOVING IT?

Who needs a boyfriend? Throw your own party on Valentine's Day, and invite your single friends. Martinis, chocolates, and a great group of people is a celebration anyone can appreciate.

NICE PACKAGE.

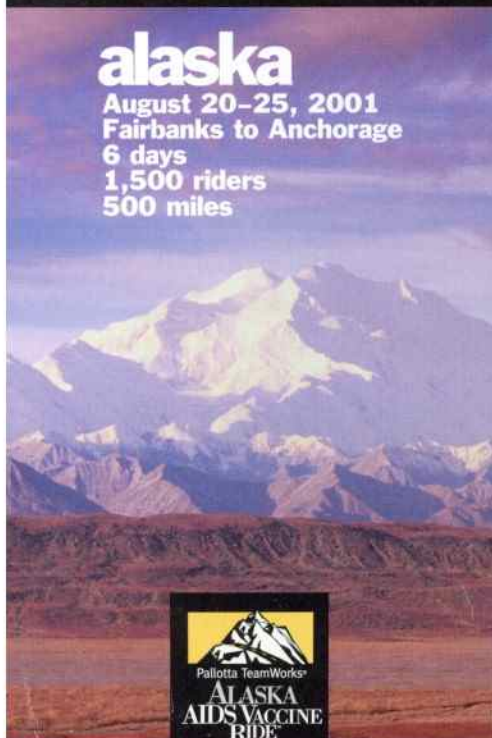


Be yourself and make it a Bud Light.

If you'd go to the ends of the earth to find a vaccine for AIDS, this is your chance.

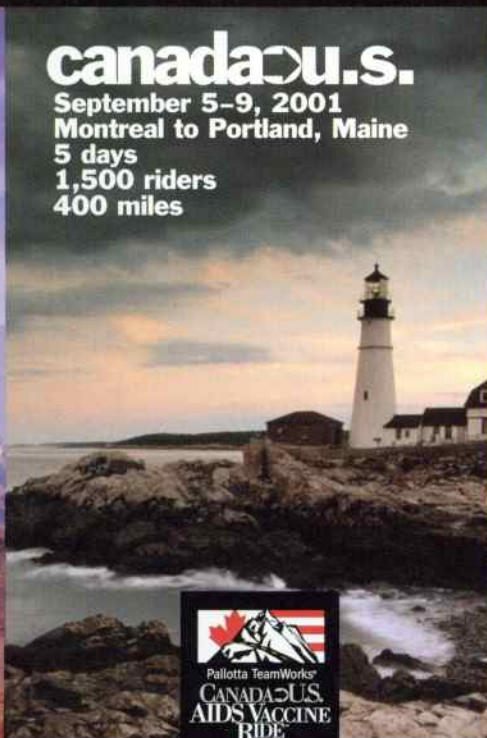
alaska

August 20-25, 2001
Fairbanks to Anchorage
6 days
1,500 riders
500 miles



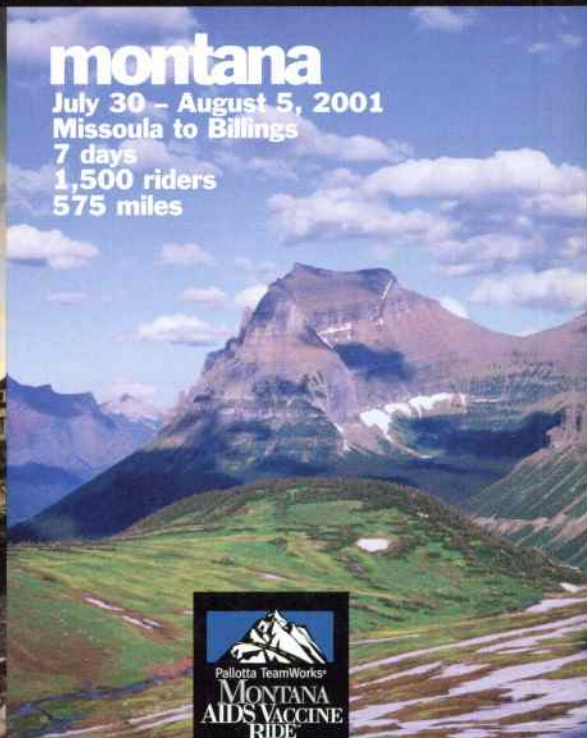
canada u.s.

September 5-9, 2001
Montreal to Portland, Maine
5 days
1,500 riders
400 miles



montana

July 30 - August 5, 2001
Missoula to Billings
7 days
1,500 riders
575 miles



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- **Each event is a ride, not a race.** 1,500 people. Cooperative, not competitive. Go at your own pace, with others at your level. Riders from ages 19 to 71 are registered, many who've never done anything like this...all attempting to move beyond their limits and accomplish something epic.

- **Hot catered meals,** showers, tents, gear transport, and tech support are all provided in a remarkable Mobile City™.

- **Produced by Pallotta TeamWorks,** renowned for "the best organized cycling events in the world," according to our own participants. We've taken 75,000 people, safely, along millions of miles of road.



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- **Don't put it off.** Life happens now. You bought this magazine because your spirit loves life and community. When are you going to do something about that? How about right now? Space is limited. Call or log on now to register or get more info.

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